

Scripture Stories

The Scripture Stories

Retold for Young Israel

IN TWO VOLUMES

— BY —

DR. MENDEL SILBER

REVISED EDITION

Volume Two

JOSHUA TO MACCABEES

BEHRMAN'S JEWISH BOOK HOUSE

1261 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

Copyright 1918
By
DR. MENDEL SILBER

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BY THE
NATIONAL PROCESS COMPANY, INC., NEW YORK, N. Y.

Table of Contents.

	Page
Joshua.....	5
Rahab and the Spies.....	7
Crossing the Jordan.....	9
The Fall of Jericho.....	11
A Defeat and a Victory.....	13
The Gibeonites.....	18
Other Wars.....	20
Dividing the Land.....	22
The Two and A Half Tribes Return.....	24
The Last Days of Joshua.....	26
The Judges.....	29
Deborah.....	34
Gideon.....	37
Gideon's Victory.....	40
Abimelech.....	45
Jephthah.....	48
Samson.....	53
Samson and the Philistines.....	58
Ruth and Naomi.....	65
Ruth and Boaz.....	68
Eli.....	71
Samuel.....	72
The Israelites Want a King.....	77
Saul.....	80
Saul's Offense.....	85
David.....	89
David and Goliath.....	92
Saul's Jealousy.....	98
David and Jonathan.....	103
David's Generosity.....	108
David's Loyalty.....	113
The Death of Saul.....	115
The Ten Commandments (Review).....	121

Table of Contents.

	Page
The Meaning of the Ten Commandments (Review).....	124
The Festivals (Review).....	127
Some Laws of Moses (Review).....	132
David Is Made King.....	133
David and the Cup of Water.....	136
David's Wrong.....	139
David and Absalom.....	142
David's Death.....	146
Solomon.....	149
Solomon's Temple.....	153
Solomon's Reign.....	156
Rehoboam.....	158
The Divided Kingdom.....	161
Elijah and Ahab.....	164
Elisha and Naaman.....	171
Jonah.....	175
Kingdom of Israel Destroyed.....	179
Kingdom of Judah Destroyed.....	182
The Fasts of Tebeth, Tammuz and Ab.....	189
The Three Youths.....	193
Daniel.....	198
The Return from Babylonia.....	201
The Samaritans.....	206
The Story of Purim.....	209
Ezra.....	223
Nehemiah.....	228
Job.....	233
The Maccabees.....	236
The Second Temple Destroyed.....	244
Our Bible.....	248
Pronouncing Glossary.....	253

Joshua.

MOSES was no longer with his people. Yet if the Israelites ever needed a good leader, they certainly needed one now. Their years of waiting and preparing had passed. The Promised Land (Canaan) was no longer to them a country far, far away. They could see it now with their own eyes. It was just across the river, but they knew that the people who lived there, a wicked and cruel people that was worshiping idols, would not let them settle there. They knew that they would have to do a great deal of fighting before they could make Canaan their home, and without a good leader they could not hope to be successful.

Happily, Joshua was just the sort of leader they needed. Moses knew the kind of man Joshua was when he told the Israelites that Joshua would lead them across the Jordan and into Canaan. For forty years Joshua had always been at the side of Moses. For forty years Joshua had served and assisted Moses. During these many years Joshua

therefore, learned much from Moses. He learned, not only the word and law of God, but he learned also to be patient, fearless, hopeful, and unselfish. All these years he was simply building up his own character. And now that the time came for him to become the leader of his people, he was well prepared for his new position—better than any one else the people might have chosen.

The first thing that Joshua did now was to call the people together and to remind them of the last words of Moses. He also reminded the two and a half tribes—Reuben, Gad and Manasseh—that they must cross the Jordan with the other tribes and help them conquer Canaan before they could settle on the land which Moses had given them this side of the river. Then he told the people that they should prepare to start across the river. He knew, he said, that God would be with him as He was with Moses, and that, if the people would only work together, with courage and trust in God, they would be able to conquer Canaan and to settle there as a free and happy nation.

However, Joshua was not going to do anything rashly. He wanted to be as careful as

possible and not place the lives of his people in danger. And so, while the people were preparing to go across, he sent two men over as spies, telling them to find out all they could about Jericho, the city that lay just opposite on the other side of the river.

Rahab and the Spies.

WHEN the spies came to Jericho, they went to an inn (a sort of hotel, or boarding house) which belonged to a lady by the name of Rahab. After they had spent several days there and found out a great deal about the city and the people, it became known that they were spies. The king (every city had a king in those days) then sent messengers to the lady who kept the hotel—she was known as “Rahab the Innkeeper”—to find out where the spies were. Rahab knew very well what this meant—that the king wanted to put the two men to death. But, Rahab was a kind woman and felt sorry for them. So she told the king’s messengers that the men they were looking for had already gone. She then told the spies to hide until

night, when they could escape from the city without being seen by anyone. The spies did as Rahab told them to do and, as soon as it got dark, they left the city. As they left, they told Rahab that they would remember and repay her kindness to them when they returned to take the city. They promised her to see to it that no harm came to her or any of her relations when all the Israelites marched upon Jericho and, in order that they might recognize her house, they told her to tie a red string to the window.

The spies thus escaped unharmed, and Rahab, you may be sure, was very glad that she had saved their lives, for she had noticed from the way these men spoke and acted that they were far better than the Canaanites and was therefore, glad to have helped them.

When the spies returned to Joshua, they told him what had happened. "We will surely conquer the land," they said, "for the people there are very much afraid of us."

From this you can see how different these spies were from the spies that Moses had sent. But, as you know, all the Israelites were different now. The forty years in the wilderness certainly did them much good. Cowards

they were when they entered it and now, as they were about to leave it, they were filled with courage. But we must not forget that those who were now ready to cross the Jordan were not those who had crossed the Red Sea. The older people, you know, died in the wilderness, and those whom Joshua was leading now were people who had either been born in the wilderness or had left Egypt as mere children. For this reason, the Israelites whom Joshua was to lead across the Jordan were fit and well prepared to enter the Promised Land.

Crossing the Jordan.

AT last the people were ready to cross the Jordan. This stream, which was narrow and had a very stony bottom, was at certain times of the year deep and swift and at other times almost dry. The Israelites felt that they could safely go across, and being somewhat tired of waiting, they were anxious to start. But Joshua could not allow them to rush forward and cross the river as best they could. They were not just a crowd moving along without any order. They

were to start as a people that followed a leader and march as soldiers who were commanded by a general. And so Joshua, before giving them the signal to start, told them in what order they were to march. The priests, he said, should carry the Ark with the Ten Commandments and march ahead until they came to the middle of the stream. They were then to stop and wait until all the people, every tribe by itself and carrying its banner, would pass by and on to the other side of the river.

The people did as they were told to do, and soon all of them had passed over safely and were in Canaan.

How glad they were to have reached the Promised Land at last!

For the first time could they feel now that all their waiting and wandering in the wilderness were indeed worth while. For the first time did they really understand now how kind God had been to them in protecting them all these years so that they could reach the country in which they hoped to make their home and live as a free nation! The very spot of ground on which they set foot after crossing the Jordan became dear to them. They

wanted to remember that spot. They wanted also their children and children's children to remember it. And so Joshua chose twelve men, one from every tribe, and told every one of them to take up a stone from the middle of the river, the place where the priests had stood with the Ark and waited until all the people had passed, and carry it over to the other side of the Jordan. These twelve stones the Israelites then placed just where they had crossed the river and stepped upon the ground of Canaan.

This done, the people put up their camps and rested. They were now ready for their leader's command to attack the first city—Jericho.

The Fall of Jericho.

AS Jericho was the first city of Canaan to be attacked and the future success of the Israelites depended on their ability to take it, Joshua planned the attack very carefully. He knew that, if the Israelites would only act together and throw themselves against the enemy, they could take the city. But the people had not been drilled

and trained enough for such work. So, when they arrived at Jericho and found the gates closed (which showed that the people of Jericho meant to keep the Israelites out of the city and to offer battle in case they tried to enter it), Joshua put them through a drill before starting the fight. In those days all great cities had high walls around them and gates in the walls for people to pass through. At night these gates used to be closed and guarded by soldiers. In this way, people used to protect themselves against enemies and used to shut out anybody whom they did not care to have among them. And Jericho had a very high wall around it and very heavy iron gates in that wall.

You can see, then, that it was not an easy thing to take a city like Jericho, and that is why Joshua wanted to drill and prepare his men first. Every day, for six days, he had them march in line and order around the wall, followed by seven priests who blew trumpets (ram's horns) as they marched. Behind these marched other priests and carried the Ark. On the seventh day Joshua had the Israelites march around the wall seven times, and then, feeling sure that they had been suf-

ficiently drilled now and that their courage was high enough, he gave them the signal to start. At once Joshua's men began to shout fiercely, and, with all their might, they threw themselves against the city. To the great surprise of the army inside, whom the shouting of the Israelites had already frightened so that they could not lift a sword, the wall fell before Joshua and his men, and the men of Jericho suddenly saw the Israelites standing before them.

With such a start, the rest was no longer hard. The people of Jericho had little courage or fighting spirit left in them by this time, and the Israelites had little trouble in defeating their enemy and conquering the city. The first battle in the land of Canaan thus ended in a complete victory for the Israelites.

A Defeat and Victory.

HE battle of Jericho gave the people some idea of the work that was before them. There were many cities like Jericho in Canaan, and the Israelites knew that they would have to conquer all of them

before they could settle down in peace. Yet they were not afraid. The victory at Jericho made them surer of themselves than they had been before, and they were ready to go forward to attack the next city, which was Ai. But Joshua wanted to be careful, and so he sent men to spy out the city first. When these men returned they told Joshua that Ai was not anything like Jericho and that he need not send the whole army against the people of Ai. Three thousand men, they said, could easily take the city.

From the way the spies had described the city of Ai, Joshua felt that they were right in saying that he should not send the whole army, and so he sent only three thousand men. But think of his disappointment when a few days later, his men came back in wild flight. They had been beaten. The people became discouraged when they learned about the defeat of these men, and Joshua himself was worried. He could not understand why the same men who had fought so bravely against Jericho should now be defeated by the small number of people at Ai. He was sure there was something wrong. He was convinced that it would be impossible for the



"They blew upon their trumpets"

Israelites to risk another battle until he found out what was wrong with these men. And, sure enough, when he looked into the matter, he learned that something sad had happened. Before conquering the city of Jericho, he had told the people that they must not touch anything that they found in the place. You see, when soldiers are allowed to take anything for themselves they often kill and wound people unnecessarily just to get their clothes, their jewelry or their money. Joshua, therefore, positively forbade his men to take anything that belonged to the people of Jericho. But there was one man, Joshua found out, by the name of Achan, who was very greedy and who had been unable to resist the temptation of taking something for himself. So, while the rest of the army was fighting, he watched his chance and, as soon as he found himself alone and unnoticed, he stole a coat and some money and hid them away in his tent.

This was, of course, a terrible thing to do. It showed that Achan was both a bad soldier and a bad man. The other people did not have anything to do with it, of course, but they, too, were in danger, for, as you know, one bad soldier can spoil a whole army, just

as one bad boy upsets a whole class. Besides when a number of people do some work together they are responsible for one another. And so, until they got rid of this greedy and bad man, Achan, all the Israelites had to suffer for the wrong he had done.

After Achan was punished—put to death—Joshua took the whole army up to Ai, and, in a peculiar way, they soon conquered the city. I must tell you of the way they did it, for it shows what a great general Joshua was and how well he had planned it all. In the middle of the night the army received orders to march upon Ai. Several thousand men then hid in a valley near the city, and with the rest of the army he made the attack. As soon as the fight began, Joshua and his men turned and made believe that they were fleeing. The people of Ai started to run after them, and when they had left the city, the men who lay hidden in the valley rose and attacked the enemy from behind. Joshua and his men now turned around and attacked the people of Ai in the front. When these people noticed what had happened they lost all courage and their defeat quickly followed.

The Gibeonites.



THE conquest of the two large cities gave the Israelites greater confidence in themselves and in their leader. It also frightened the other kings of Canaan, who made up their minds not to let the Israelites settle in their land. For this reason five of them united and were going to fight the Israelites together.

While these five kings were getting their armies ready for battle, the Gibeonites, a people living nearby, thought of a scheme by which they could save their cities without fighting. They sent messengers to Joshua, asking Joshua and the Israelites to take them for their allies—that is, promise to be their friends and to help them whenever any other nation made war upon them. When these messengers came to Joshua they were dressed as though they had traveled for a long time. Their clothes were worn and their shoes torn, and some bread they had with them was dry and moldy. In this way, they succeeded in making the Israelites believe that they had come from some distant land, and Joshua made peace with them and promised to protect them in case of war.

A few days later, when the Israelites continued their march, they came upon the City of Gibeon, intending to capture it. To their great surprise, the same men who had come to them as messengers a few days before and to whom they had promised their friendship, came forward to meet them. When Joshua saw them, he recognized them and knew what had happened. He was very angry with the Gibeonites for having deceived him. Yet he had to keep his promise even though these people had gotten it in a dishonest way. The Israelites, therefore, left the city of Gibeon unharmed and marched away.

The Israelites had not gone far, however, when they had to return to Gibeon, for the five kings who had united against them attacked the city of Gibeon and threatened to kill all the Gibeonites for having made peace with their enemy. The Gibeonites quickly sent word to Joshua, who at once led the Israelites back to Gibeon. A fierce battle now took place, and in one day—it seemed as though Joshua had gotten the sun to stand still, so much and such brave fighting did the Israelites do in that one day—Joshua's army

defeated the united armies of the five kings and put them to flight.

The Gibeonites thanked the Israelites for having saved their lives, saying that they wanted to be the Israelites' servants. (In later years they came to be known as the wood-choppers and water-carriers of the Israelites). The cities of the defeated kings, then, fell into the hands of the Israelites, who thus became the masters of a great deal of land through the one battle of Gibeon.

Other Wars.



MUCH land was now in the hands of the Israelites, but much more they still had to conquer if they wanted to settle down and live in peace. It hurt the Israelites very much, you may be sure, to have to be at war with so many people for such a long time. War is always a terrible thing. It is sad to think that there should have to be such a thing as war, in which many people are killed or wounded. But the nations who lived in Canaan were, as you know, very wicked people and worshiped idols. And it was their

worship of idols in particular that made them so bad and wicked, for they used to sacrifice human beings—at times men and women, but most often children—to those idols. No one's life was, therefore, safe in Canaan as long as these nations lived there, and the Israelites simply had to rid the country of them and their idols before they made their home there.

Onward, then, the Israelites marched after defeating those five kings and taking their land. They found that many other kings of Canaan had also united against them. But they were not afraid. Bravely and without fear they went on fighting the armies that were sent against them and won victory after victory, gaining more and more ground and taking more and more land until almost the whole country of Canaan was theirs.

Altogether, these wars lasted seven years, and the Israelites had to fight for every piece of land they gained. But they were victorious and could at last start life in their new home. And it was certainly a good thing that they were victorious and succeeded in conquering the country, for the cruelty of the Canaanites was now replaced by the kindness of the Israelites, and the worship of the one

true God took the place of wicked idolatry (the worship of idols), and in time the whole world learned from the Israelites the meaning of true religion.

Dividing the Land.

THE time had now come for the Israelites to settle in the land they had so bravely conquered. The wars had worn them out and they longed for peace. But something else had to be done before they could start to live as a nation. Before they could begin to cultivate the soil, build cities and set up a government of their own, the land of Canaan had to be divided, first among the different tribes and then among the different families.

This was no easy matter, as the number of families in every tribe and the number of persons in every family had to be found out before the land could be divided. For, the Israelites were now a united people, a nation, and they had to act as a nation should—justly and unselfishly. All of them had fought for the land, and all of them were entitled to

have a share in the land. The land was therefore, to be divided so that no one would have reason to complain. There was to be no such thing as some people taking much land and leaving little for others. Joshua was not going to let some people become very rich and allow others to remain very poor. Every person was to get an equal share.

For this reason the land was divided into as many parts as there were people in the country, and the number of parts every tribe received was equal to the number of people the tribe had. In this way Joshua made sure that no injustice would be done and no favoritism shown to anyone. It also made it possible for people belonging to one tribe to have land side by side. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe Manasseh were, of course, not given any land in Canaan, as they had already chosen their land on the other side of the Jordan. Nor did the tribe of Levi receive any special portion. The Levites were to be the teachers of the other tribes and could not, therefore, live by themselves and separated from the other people. Besides, as teachers, they had no time to take care of any land, and so every tribe set aside

five cities for them and helped to support them.

The Two and a half Tribes Return.

HAVING helped the other tribes in fighting and conquering the country, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe Manasseh now felt that they could return to their families and their land on the other side of the Jordan. So they came to Joshua, and he told them that they could leave. He blessed them also and told them always to worship the true God and always to remember the laws which Moses had given to their people.

When these tribes had crossed the Jordan and reached their homes, they put up a big building of stone which looked somewhat like the temples that used to be built to idols. They wanted the building to be a sort of monument that would remind them and their children of the time when they separated from their people in Canaan and crossed the river Jordan to settle in their new home. There was nothing wrong, of course, in having a monument like

that. But it came near causing a great deal of trouble. Can you tell why?

When the other tribes heard that these people had a building which looked like the buildings that the Canaanites used to have for their idols, they at once thought that the two and a half tribes wanted to worship idols. They made the mistake which all of us make when we imagine people to be bad, without trying to find out first whether they are really bad, and without giving them a chance to explain why they do the things which we think bad. And this is exactly what the Israelites in Canaan did. Just because the two and a half tribes had put up that building, without stopping to find out what that building was for, they called these tribes idolators and wanted to make war upon them. But Joshua told them that they must not act that way and that they should first find out whether the people of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh really meant to worship idols.

One of the priests and some of the officers among the Israelites were then sent across the Jordan to the two and a half tribes to ask them what they wanted to do with that building. When these men were told that the

building was to stand only as a monument and that the people of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh were going to worship the one true God only, just as the other tribes meant to do, they were glad that nothing rash had been done to hurt or injure the two and a half tribes. And you may be sure that, when they returned and told the other tribes what they had found out to be the truth, the people felt very much ashamed of themselves for having wrongly accused those who had fought for them so bravely and who had helped them conquer the land of Canaan.

The Last Days of Joshua.

IN the meantime the great leader Joshua, had grown old. He felt his end near, but he was happy and contented. As he thought over the past years, he felt that God had been very good to him in allowing him to lead his people until they had conquered the land and made a home for themselves. In a way, he was really more successful than Moses had been, for Moses had freed the people from Egypt,

had led them and given them great laws; but he did not live to see them entering the land toward which he had led them and where they could follow those laws. Joshua, however, did go with them to that land and lived to see them all settled as a real nation in their own country. Besides, he felt sure that he had done everything he could for his people and that he had led them unselfishly and well, just as his teacher, Moses, should have liked him to lead them. And that, more than anything else, made him happy.

So, you see, Joshua had a right to feel happy and contented, even though he knew that his end was near. The only thing that he wanted to do before he died was to make sure in some way that the Israelites would always obey the laws of God. They did obey God's laws while he was their leader, but he did not know who would lead them or whether they would have a leader after he was gone, and so he was afraid that they might somehow forget those precious laws which they had received from Moses. He therefore called the people together and told them that he was beginning to feel weak and that he knew he could not live much longer. He then reminded them

of all the things that had happened to them and their fathers and forefathers from the time of Abraham. He reminded them also that God had been good to them and that they had several times promised to serve God. Before he died, he told them, he wanted them to promise again always to serve God and to obey His laws.

This the people promised, and Joshua had a big stone put up as a monument that would always remind them of their promise.

Soon afterward Joshua died. He had reached the age of 110 years and was buried in the mountain of Ephraim. The Israelites felt, of course, very, very sorry to lose their great leader and teacher, the second in greatness to Moses himself, and always remembered what he had done for them. For, Joshua was to Palestine what George Washington was to this country—the father and founder of a nation.

The Judges.

N a way, the Israelites were worse off now after the death of Joshua than they had been after the death of Moses. For Moses had named Joshua to take his place as leader, but Joshua did not name anyone to take his place, and so the Israelites were left without a leader. For some time, to be sure, they could now get along very well without any leader. They owned the country, enjoyed peace and had laws—God's laws which they received through Moses—by which to govern themselves. The Canaanites were no longer there to hurt or disturb them, and the different tribes, worshipping the same God and obeying the same laws, lived in peace with one another. The memory, too, of former times, of their leaders, Moses and Joshua, and of the promises which they had made to these, kept them together and they were a united people. For this reason they could get along without a leader, spending their time in building cities and working on their land.

But the time came when the Israelites could no longer go on living that way without any-

one to lead them. It seems that, after some time had passed, they forgot their promise to Joshua, for they no longer followed God's laws and began to worship idols. Their government then became bad and the tribes were no longer united. People did as they pleased and not what they knew to be right, and the different tribes, no longer worshipping the same God nor obeying the same laws, could not act together. This meant, of course, that the nation was getting weaker and weaker all the time.

Meanwhile, the Canaanites had grown in number and, seeing that the Israelites were getting weaker, they set out to attack the Israelites and to make war upon them. This taught the Israelites two things. It taught them that, if they wanted to stay in the land and not be killed off or enslaved by those wicked Canaanites, they must have a good government, which they could have only if they obeyed God's laws, and it taught them also that they must have someone to lead them in peace as well as in war. So, after worshipping idols and leading a sort of rough and unruly life for a number of years, they started to worship God again and began to

choose leaders for war and peace. These leaders were called JUDGES. Such a Judge was generally chosen in a time of war to beat back the enemy, and then, after the war was over, he would remain the leader of the people, teaching them their laws and settling whatever quarrels arose among them. Anyone who was just and honest, brave and unselfish, anyone, in other words, who had a fine character, could become a Judge.

The first of these Judges was Othniel, a nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, who, you remember, was one of the spies Moses sent to Canaan, and who was one of the two (Joshua was the other) to encourage the people by telling them that they would surely conquer the country. Othniel was chosen several years after the cruel king of a people called the Mesopotamians had come with a mighty army and defeated the Israelites and made them pay big sums of money every year.

Othniel was a man of strength and courage and full of love for his people and his country, and so he gathered a band of brave men around him and drove the Mesopotamians out of the country. And, as long as Othniel

lived, the Israelites enjoyed peace, for their enemies did not dare attack them.

After the death of Othniel the Israelites again started to worship idols and disobeyed God's laws and again one of their enemies—this time it was Eglon, the King of Moab—noticed that they had grown weaker and made war upon them. This time, too, they were defeated and even lost the City of Jericho. For eighteen long years now they were no longer masters of their own land and had to pay a great deal of money to the Moabites every year. Then the Israelites saw their mistake and returned to the worship of God. This united the people again, and so, when they chose a new Judge, who was a strong and brave man—his name was Ehud—he was able to defeat the Moabites and to drive them out of the country. This meant a great deal for the Israelites, for the Moabites numbered ten thousand men, while Ehud had only a few fighters under him.

For a long time there was now peace in the country, and then, when a strong but wicked nation called the Philistines made war upon the Israelites, another Judge, Shamgar, quickly put the enemy to flight.



DEBORAH

Deborah.

HE next Judge to lead the Israelites in war and peace was a woman by the name of Deborah. Among other people such a thing as having a woman for a leader would have been impossible in those days, for they did not think that a woman could be wise and brave. But the Israelites did not think that way of women. They thought a woman could be as great as a man and that she could be wise and brave and do a great deal for her religion and her people. In fact, you remember, there were several great women among the Israelites, such as the wives of the patriarchs—Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah—and the sister of Moses, Miriam. But Deborah was even greater than any of these, and so she was chosen Judge.

And it was, indeed, a good thing that the Israelites had so wise and brave a Judge as Deborah to lead them at that time, for they were very badly off. Jabin, the King of the Canaanites, had sent his general, Sisera, with a big army to make war upon the Israelites. The Israelites were very much frightened, and

it seemed as though they would lose much of their land. Sisera was a famous general and his army was big and strong. Besides the thousands of men, Sisera had with him 900 chariots (two-wheeled carriages drawn by horses), which frightened the Israelites even more than the men did, and so they did not have the courage to oppose the mighty general of the Canaanites. I must tell you that in those days, when there were no guns yet and people used to fight with sword and spear, war chariots were feared as much as cannons are now, for they used to be driven right through the ranks of the enemy and used to kill ever so many soldiers. Do you understand, now, why the Israelites feared Sisera and his army so much?

But though the men were afraid, this woman, Deborah, "a mother in Israel," was not. When she heard what was going on, she sent for a man by the name of Barak, whom she knew to be brave and strong, and told him to gather an army of ten thousand men and to march with them against the enemy. Barak told her that he would do so only if she would go with him. When Deborah asked him if he would not be ashamed to have it

known that he was afraid and that a woman led the people to victory, he said he knew that the people would have more courage and would fight more bravely if she were present, and so Deborah promised to go with him.

Ten thousand men were now quickly gathered and the two armies, the one commanded by Sisera and the other by Deborah and Barak, met near Mount Tabor. But, instead of waiting for the enemy to attack them, the Israelites, at the command of Deborah, threw themselves upon the enemy with such force and so suddenly that the Canaanites became frightened and confused. The horses too, shied and dashed at each other, upsetting the chariots and throwing their riders to the ground. The rest of the mighty army fled in confusion. A heavy rainstorm, coming on suddenly, added still more to the trouble and confusion of the fleeing Canaanites, and ever so many perished. Sisera himself managed to escape, but was later killed by a woman named Jael in whose house he was trying to hide himself.

Thus a great victory was won by the Israelites against a most powerful enemy, and the country enjoyed peace for about forty

years. That battle with Sisera will always be remembered by a beautiful song which Deborah sang to celebrate the victory, and which is called the "Song of Deborah."

Gideon.

OU might think that the Israelites now kept on worshiping God and were strong and united, but they were not. After the death of Deborah they again forgot the lesson they had learned so often and started to worship idols, just as the nations of Canaan did. In other ways, too, they began to act as they had seen the Canaanites acting. They lied and cheated and robbed one another. That sort of life did them no good, of course. They were getting weaker and weaker all the time, and it was only after new trouble came upon them that they saw their mistake. But even then it required a strong leader to show them their wrong.

What happened was this: The Midianites, a large, wild nation of the desert, had been in the habit of going from place to place and living off the crops and cattle they could steal

from other nations. (There are people in Palestine who do that even now.) When they noticed that the Israelites were all the time getting weaker, they swooped down upon them and took all the crops and cattle they could lay their hands on away from them. If any Israelite tried to oppose these robbers he was killed. This meant that even the lives of the Israelites were not safe and so they were very much afraid of these Midianites. Yet they did not leave off worshipping idols, and, instead of uniting and trying to drive those robbers off their land, they hid among the rocks and hills or in caves.

When this had been going on for several years, and things still kept on getting worse and worse every day, and there seemed to be no hope for the poor and frightened Israelites, a great leader unexpectedly arose and freed them from the wicked Midianites. There was a man named Gideon whose brothers had been killed by the same Midianites. There was another man living at that time whose name is not known now, but who was a great prophet. (A prophet is a great religious teacher who explains to the people

the will of God. Moses and Deborah, for instance, were prophets.) This prophet had for some time been telling the Israelites to leave off worshiping idols and to get together and fight the Midianites. But the Israelites did not listen to him.

One night, while threshing wheat which he had managed to hide from the Midianites, Gideon was thinking about his brothers who were killed and about the troubles that his people were in. The prophet's words—he had heard the prophet speak that day—came to his mind. "If only my people would worship God again," thought he, "and get up enough courage to fight those Midianites. All they need is some brave man, one whom they would obey, to lead them. Oh, how I should like to lead them? But it is foolish to think that I could lead the people. How could I? My family is poor, and I am the youngest of the family. Who will obey me?"

Gideon went on threshing, feeling very, very sorry that he could not do anything for his people. But the prophet's words and the thought that someone, surely, must have the courage to fight against those thieves, the Midianites, would not leave him. Something

within him seemed to tell him that he should try and lead the people and that, if he only showed enough courage, others would follow him. "God will surely help me and——" He had to stop there, for how could he hope that God would help him? How could he even pray to God to help him? Did not his own father worship idols? Was there not an altar (a heap of stones made even and smooth) which his father had built near his home as a monument to one of the idols—Baal?

No sooner did Gideon think of that than his mind was made up. He was going to break the altar his father had built to Baal and build an altar to God in its place. He would then get together as many strong men as he could, and with these he would fight the Midianites.

Gideon's Victory.



WHEN it became known that Gideon had broken the altar of Baal, the people wanted to put him to death. But his father, whom Gideon had shown how wrong it was to worship idols, said: "If

Baal is a god, let him fight for himself.' These words set the people a-thinking about the idols and they came to understand how foolish it was to believe that pieces of wood and stone, the idols, which had no life in them, could be gods or hear their prayers. This was just what Gideon's father wanted the people to do, of course, and Gideon himself felt very much encouraged. He had already succeeded in one thing better than he had hoped to succeed—he had taken some people away from the worship of idols.

The next thing to do was to get some men with whom to fight the Midianites. And in this, too, he succeeded better than he had expected. When he told the people what he meant to do, about thirty-two thousand men gathered around him, ready to follow him against the enemy. But Gideon felt sure that not all the men who had come had the courage to fight and that not all really wanted to fight, and he was not going to take men with him who had no courage. Rather than have many soldiers without courage, he wanted to have a few soldiers with courage. He therefore told those men that he wanted all who were afraid to go home. Twenty-two thou-

sand thereupon went away and about ten thousand remained. But Gideon was not yet satisfied. He felt sure that out of the ten thousand ever so many had been in the habit of worshiping idols, and he made up his mind not to take with him anyone who had been worshiping idols. But how was he to tell who had been worshiping idols and who had not?

At last, Gideon thought of a good way to find it out. He started out with all the ten thousand men and, when they came to a brook, he told them to drink some water from that brook before they went any farther. He then stood by and watched to see how they would try to drink. He was sure that those who had been in the habit of kneeling to idols would get down on their knees to drink, while those who had not worshiped idols would bend down and take up some water in their hands and drink it. And it turned out just as he had thought. Only three hundred of the men did not kneel down to drink. These Gideon then chose to go with him. All the others he sent home.

That night Gideon went right to the place where the Midianites were lying around their camps, and, from the way they were talking

among themselves, he could tell that they were beginning to be afraid of him. So he made up his mind to attack them right away. He at once returned to his men, therefore, and gave every one of them a trumpet made out of a ram's horn and an empty pitcher with a lighted torch hidden inside. You see, he had planned the attack carefully and had taken these things along. He told his men then that, when he blew his trumpet, they should all blow their trumpets and then break their pitchers and wave their torches and shout, "The sword of God and Gideon!" The men did as they were told, and the Midianites suddenly awakened from their sleep by the noise and seeing the torches swinging in the air, thought that there were ever so many thousands of men in Gideon's army, and so they became very much frightened. Their camels, too, were frightened at the light of the torches. A few minutes later Midianites and camels were fleeing in wild confusion, and in their flight they fought one another, threw one another down and trampled upon one another. Gideon's men then pursued the enemy, and many of the Israelites took up the chase with them. But the Midianites

succeeded in getting across the Jordan before they could be overtaken, and so Gideon and his men also crossed the Jordan and fell suddenly upon them. The Midianites, who thought themselves safe after they had crossed the Jordan, not expecting Gideon to follow them, were very much frightened and were soon defeated. The defeat was so great in fact, that those wicked robbers never dared to cross the Jordan again.

Before I finish the story of this battle, I must tell you of something very strange that happened to Gideon and his men after they had crossed the Jordan. They were very hungry and tired, and so they were glad when they came to those places where the two and a half tribes had settled on the other side of the Jordan. Gideon thought that those Israelites would surely give his men something to eat and let them rest a few hours. But what do you think happened? Those Israelites feared the Midianites so much that they refused to open their houses and to give food to their own people, and so Gideon and his men had to go on without any food or rest. These people certainly deserved punish-

ment for being such cowards, and, on his way back, Gideon did punish them.

When Gideon and his brave men returned, the Israelites were so glad to have been freed from the Midianites and so thankful to Gideon that they wanted him to be their king. But Gideon (you can see what a good and unselfish man he was) said to them: "Neither I, nor my son, shall be your king; God alone shall reign over you."

Abimelech.

It makes one sad to think that a very good father sometimes has a very bad son. When Gideon died he left several sons behind him. One of these, Abimelech, was as wicked as Gideon had been good. Now, Gideon, you remember, was asked to be king and refused; but Abimelech tried in every possible way to become the king of the Israelites. His brothers, who were more like their father, would not hear of it, of course. But what did Abimelech do? He hired Canaanites to kill his brothers. Only one of his brothers, Jotham, escaped. Abimelech then went to the city of Shechem and, by

bribing the people there, got them to make him king.

When Jotham heard what had happened he went to Shechem and, standing on a hill where the people of the city could see and hear him, he called to them and said that he wanted to tell them a story. When the people had come closer to the hill, anxious to hear the story, Jotham said: "Once upon a time the trees wanted to have a king, so they said to the olive tree: 'Come, be our king!' But the olive tree said: 'Shall I give up my fine olives and my sweet oil, just to be your king?' Then they went to the fig tree and said: 'Come, be our king.' But the fig tree said: 'Shall I give up my nice, sweet figs, just to be your king?' Then they went to the vine and said: 'You be our king.' But the vine also refused, saying: 'Shall I give up my grapes and my wine, just to be your king?' Then the trees said to the bramble (a thorn-bush): 'Bramble, you be our king.' And the bramble did not refuse. On the contrary, the bramble said: 'You had better make me king, for, remember, even if I cannot give any shade, when I catch fire I can burn the biggest and tallest trees.' "

When Jotham had finished saying all this he fled. The people had not expected to hear any story like that, but it was a good lesson for them. What Jotham meant was this: The Israelites had had great men for leaders, such as Moses, Joshua and Gideon, yet none of them wanted to be king. But now the people of Shechem made the wicked Abimelech their king, a man who, like the bramble which can offer no shade but which can burn other trees, does not protect his people, but can destroy them, just as he had destroyed his own brothers.

For a while the people of Shechem took no notice of what Jotham had said. But after a few years had passed, they came to see what a bad man their "bramble king," as he was now called, was, and so they planned to rid themselves of him. But Abimelech found out what they meant to do and, with his usual cruelty he killed most of the people and burned the city. He now thought that he could go on being wicked and cruel all his life. But he soon found out that wickedness does not prosper very long. Anxious to be king, he attacked a nearby city called Thebez. The people of Thebez, in order to save themselves,

fled to a high, strong tower. Abimelech followed them. But while he was under the tower, fighting to enter it or to set fire to it, a woman on the top of the tower took a large stone and threw it down upon his head. Seeing that he was badly wounded, he called to one of his soldiers: "Pierce me with your sword and kill me; otherwise people will say that a woman killed me." The soldier did not at all mind doing what he was told, for no one really liked the wicked king, and the next minute Abimelech fell down dead. The life of this cruel, greedy and unjust man, "the bramble king," was thus suddenly ended.

Jephthah.

 IDEON had been mistaken when he thought that he could not become the leader of his people and that the Israelites would not obey him because he belonged to a poor family. To be great one does not have to be rich. By showing courage and acting rightly, anyone has a chance to become great, as you will see from the story I am going to tell you now.

It was several years after Abimelech's death, when the Ammonites made war upon the

Israelites and tried to conquer their land, that the Israelites again looked around for the right sort of man to lead them. And the man they chose was one whom no one had ever expected to become a leader. His name was Jephthah, and his home was in the land of Gilead, on the other side of the Jordan. He was brought up with half-brothers, or step-brothers (he and they had the same father, but he had a different mother from theirs) who treated him very meanly. After his father's death his step-brothers acted worse to him, and at last drove him out of the house. The people of the city in which he lived also did not behave well toward him. They had nothing against him but they did not like his mother, it seems, and so they treated him badly. He therefore left the city and went to a strange place, working at whatever he could find to do for a living. But he never forgot that he was an Israelite, which meant that he worshiped the true God, and he always remained honest, just and truthful. Even though he himself had been treated badly and meanly, he always tried to be good and kind to those who needed his help or advice. So it came that after a while a number of homeless

men, who were out of work and had no friends, gathered around him and he became their leader.

Now, those Ammonites I told you about had attacked Gilead and made war upon the two and a half tribes living there. In time they planned to cross the Jordan and make war also upon the other tribes. At any rate, for the present the people of Gilead were the ones in danger. A leader had to be quickly found. But there seemed to be no one brave enough to become the leader. Jephthah was then thought of, for everybody knew that he was a very brave man. Besides, he was already the leader of a number of people who would help him fight the Ammonites. So it was decided to ask Jephthah to become the leader of his people, and a number of men were sent to tell him about it. Among those who went to Jephthah were some of the same men who had treated him so badly. Another man in his place might have refused to help those people now that they needed him. But Jephthah was not the kind of man to refuse his service to his country when it was in danger, and so he simply said: "Of course, I know that you were never my friends and that

you have come to me now only because you are in trouble, for I remember how badly you treated me; but if you really want me to be your chief I shall lead you against the enemy."

When it became known that Jephthah was going to be the leader, everything about Jephthah was forgotten but his bravery, and the people of Gilead felt glad and hopeful. But, before making war upon the enemy, Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonites to ask them if they would not let the Israelites alone and have peace. The king of the Ammonites said that he wanted war and not peace, and so there was nothing left for Jephthah to do but to fight. A fierce battle now took place between the people of Gilead under Jephthah and the Ammonites. Jephthah and his men fought like heroes and the Ammonites were defeated and had to flee for their lives.

After the battle Jephthah and his soldiers returned to their homes, thinking that they would now be able to enjoy a long rest. But their rest was soon broken. And this time the trouble came, not from any strange nation, but from one of the tribes among the

Israelites themselves. You know, some people never like to see any good work done, excepting when they themselves have had a hand in doing it. And the men of Ephraim, it seems, were that sort of people. After the Ammonites had been defeated, these Ephraimites started to quarrel with Jephthah because he had not asked them to help fight the Ammonites. Some harsh words then passed between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites. This led to war, and the Ephraimites were defeated. By a clever scheme Jephthah was then able to capture a large number of the fleeing Ephraimites. He had his men guard the river and, when any man tried to cross it, they would stop him and ask him if he was an Ephraimite. If he said he was not, they would tell him to say "shibboleth," which means "a stream." If he said "sibboleth" (The Ephraimites could not say "sh"). Jephthah's men knew that he belonged to the tribe of Ephraim and captured him.

Jephthah thus carried off two victories, one right after the other. And he certainly deserved success, for he was a very good and brave man and made a fine leader. There is only one great fault he had, and it is this: "He

used to make rash promises which he found it hard to keep, and for which he was always sorry after he had made them. He once put the life of his own daughter, the only child he had, into danger by promising to sacrifice to God whatever he saw first when he came home from one of these battles in which he and his men were victorious.

Samson.

UEPHTHAH lived only six years longer, and, after he died, several other Judges led the Israelites. For a number of years all was now peaceful and quiet, and the Israelites already imagined that they would never again have to think of such a terrible thing as war. But their peace was broken when a strong and savage nation, the Philistines (the same nation whom Shamgar had defeated), had come and settled near them and made the property and even the lives of the Israelites unsafe. Again the people needed a leader, but there seemed to be no one brave and strong enough to lead them. The one man who was strong and brave enough to help them, and who did

finally become their leader, did not help them in the right way. The name of this man was Samson, and he was thought to be the strongest man that ever lived.

He was the only child his parents had and was brought up with the greatest care and kept away from everything that might in any way hurt him or make him weak. His parents would not even cut his hair, for fear that he might be injured by it. As he was born at the time when the Philistines were in the habit of attacking the Israelites, his parents' great hope was that he would some day be able to lead his people and free them from the wicked Philistines.

I am afraid, though, his parents spoiled Samson. They were so anxious that he should grow up to be a *strong man* that they did not teach him to be a *good man*. Strong he certainly was, and brave, too. There was something in his long and uncut hair, it seems, which gave him great strength, and already as a boy he was stronger than any other boy and could do things that no other boy could. But he did not learn to use his strength rightly. He was strong in body, but not in mind. When he wanted to do anything he did not

stop to think whether it was right to do it but just because he had the strength to do whatever he pleased, he went ahead and did it.

When Samson grew up he showed that he was not the right kind of man to lead the Israelites. Yet they were glad enough to have somebody who could help them against those Philistines, and so he became their Judge. Already the Philistines were beginning to feel his strength and courage, and it looked as though the Israelites would soon be rid of their troubles. But Samson spoiled it all by marrying a Philistine woman. When he told his parents that he wanted to marry a daughter of the Philistines, his parents begged him not to do it. They tried to show him how wrong it was to marry anyone from that wicked nation and told him that he would surely feel sorry for marrying one who had been brought up in a different religion from his and whose parents did not worship the one true God. But Samson, spoiled and in the habit of doing anything he pleased, did not listen to his parents, although he must have known that he was acting wrongly.

At his wedding he asked the Philistines who were present to guess a puzzle he would put

to them. The Philistines asked him to tell them what it was, saying that if they did not guess it within seven days they would make him a present of thirty suits of clothes and that if they did guess it he should make them the same kind of present. Samson then told them the puzzle, which was this: "Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong came the sweet."

What made him think of such a puzzle was something that had happened a short time before. As he passed a wood one day a lion rushed out and, roaring fiercely, was ready to spring upon him. But Samson grasped the lion by the jaw and tore the beast in half. A few days later, as he passed the same place, he noticed that the hot sun had dried up the body of the lion and that a swarm of bees had made honey there. And it was of this that Samson thought when he put the puzzle to the Philistines, who, of course, could not guess it.

The seven days had almost passed, and the Philistines could not yet answer Samson's puzzle. If they were honest people, they would simply have paid what they had promised to pay. But the Philistines were not

honest and they did not mean to keep their promise, so they went to Samson's wife and told her that she must find out from her husband what the puzzle meant. Samson's wife then asked Samson to tell her the answer to that puzzle and, when he refused to tell her, she cried until he did. She told it to the Philistines, and, making believe that they had guessed it, they came to Samson and said: "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?"

Samson knew now that they had played a trick on him by getting the answer from his wife, and he told them so. He then went to Ashkelon, a Philistine city, caught thirty Philistines, took their clothes away from them and gave these to the men whom he had asked the puzzle. He was, of course, angry at his wife but did not want to quarrel with her, and so he returned to his parents.

Had Samson been as wise as he was strong he would now have seen his mistake in marrying a Philistine woman and would not have had anything more to do with those wicked Philistines. But he was not wise and, after staying a few weeks at his parents' house, he went back to see his wife. To his great sur-

prise, her father would not let him enter the house. This made Samson so angry that he made up his mind to punish the Philistines, for he knew that they had gotten his wife's father to act that way. And he punished them in a very peculiar way. He caught three hundred foxes and tied them in pairs, tail to tail. To every pair of foxes he then tied a burning torch and drove all the animals into the fields and olive yards of the Philistines, thus burning all the grain and the olive trees of his enemies. The Philistines were terribly angry and, to get even with Samson, they set fire to his wife's house, burning not only the building but also her and her family. This gave Samson a further excuse for attacking the Philistines, and many of them lost their lives.

Samson and the Philistines.

HE Philistines now made up their minds to get Samson into their power and, having heard that he had gone to the land of Judah, they gathered a very large army and attacked the tribe of Judah. The

men of Judah were afraid of the Philistines, and so they went and found Samson and asked him what they should do. Samson, to save these people, told them that he would let them bind him with strong ropes and turn him over to the Philistines. The people of Judah did not like to do that, of course, but they did not know what else to do, so they tied Samson with strong ropes and handed him over to the enemy. The Philistines were overjoyed to see this powerful man all bound and in their hands. But their joy did not last long, for suddenly and with one pull Samson broke the ropes and, picking up the first thing that lay in the way—it happened to be the jawbone of a donkey—he struck right and left until the Philistines fled in terror and confusion.

After that, the Philistines did not dare attack Samson. They were all the time wishing, though, that he would come to one of their cities so that they might at least make him a prisoner. But they soon found out that they could not even do that. For, he really did come to one of their cities—Gaza was its name—and the Philistines locked the gate of the city, feeling sure that this time he could

not escape them. Samson arose in the middle of the night, walked to the city gates and, when he found these locked, he lifted them out of their hinges and carried them on his shoulders to the top of a mountain near Gaza. You can imagine the surprise of those Philistines the following morning when they found that the gates were gone and, as they went out to look for them, they saw those immense gates posted there on the top of the mountain. More than ever did they now feel that it would be best for them to let both Samson and the Israelites alone.

Now, if Samson's mind were only as strong as his body was, he might have led the Israelites against those cruel Philistines and could have succeeded in driving the enemy out of the country. But Samson's mind was not strong. He was powerful enough to tear a lion, or to break strong ropes, or to defeat a whole army, or to carry big and heavy iron gates to the top of a mountain, but he had no power over himself. His first marriage to the daughter of a Philistine should have taught him a lesson. He could not help knowing that his parents were right when they asked him not to marry any other but a daughter of

an Israelite. But the lesson was altogether lost on Samson, for, when he met another Philistine woman whom he liked—Delilah was her name—he married her. And this marriage cost Samson his life and the Israelites their peace.

When the Philistines heard that Delilah was married to Samson, they came to her and offered her a great deal of money if she would find out for them what it was that made Samson so strong. Delilah, who loved money and her own people more than she loved her husband, then asked Samson to tell her the secret of his strength and in what way his power could be taken away from him. Samson understood why his wife wanted to know all that, and so he made up his mind to fool both her and the Philistines. "If," he said, "I were bound with seven fresh, wet ropes, I could not break them." Delilah tried that and, in the middle of the night, when Samson was asleep, she tied him with seven fresh wet ropes and then woke him and said: "The Philistines are coming." But Samson suddenly broke the ropes, and the Philistines, who had been waiting outside, fled. Delilah, you may be sure, did not at all like to find out

that her husband had deceived her and she made up her mind to try again and again until he told her the truth. Samson, who was sure now that his wife was on the side of his enemies, deceived her several times more. But, at last, when Delilah took to crying and cried all day long, saying that he did not love her and that he only wanted to ridicule her, Samson could stand it no longer and told her that there was something in his hair which made him so strong.

Delilah sent at once for the Philistines and waited until night when Samson was asleep. She then cut off his hair and called the Philistines into the house. The Philistines took hold of Samson and, as he awoke, he wanted to strike out against them but found that his strength was gone.

Poor Samson! The Philistines now took cruel revenge on him; they bound him with heavy chains, put his eyes out, and took him to Gaza where they placed him into prison and made him work as a slave, grinding corn. Shortly after that, the Philistines came together in Gaza to celebrate a great feast and to offer sacrifices to their idol, Dagan. The main reason for that celebration was their



SAMSON AND DELILAH

joy in having gotten Samson into their hands. Thousands of them had come to Gaza for that feast. The large temple of their idol was crowded with Philistines, and in the middle of the celebration they had the blind Samson brought before them so that they could tease him and make sport of him. Savagely they danced around Samson and called him all sorts of names. Poor Samson felt miserable. He had come to understand his terrible mistake by this time. His hair had started to grow again and he felt himself growing stronger. But his eyes were gone, and he was in the hands of his enemies. "If God would only give me my old strength back again just once, so that I could kill these wicked Philistines, I should be happy to die with them," he thought. He then asked the little boy who was leading him to take him over and let him feel the pillars on which the building rested. The boy did that, and Samson, praying to God, took hold of the two center pillars and with one great pull he tore them down. The big temple fell upon the Philistines and upon himself.

Poor Samson thus got his wish—he died with the Philistines. But it is sad to think

that a man like Samson who could have done so much for his people should have come to such an end. His life was simply wasted, and all because he could not manage himself. He might have been as great a leader as Joshua or Gideon was, if he had only used his strength rightly.

Ruth and Naomi.

HE next story I am going to tell you is not about any leader of the Israelites, nor about any war, but about a noble and sweet woman who came from the land of Moab. You have heard a great deal about those wicked nations of Canaan and near Canaan, and you will, therefore, be glad, I am sure, to hear that there was at least one good and true person among them.

The wicked nations who were always attacking the Israelites used to take much of the food away, either by destroying or by stealing the corn and wheat of the Israelites, and so there was once a famine in the land. This meant suffering for many of the Israelites, and some of them went to live in other countries. One of these, Elimelech, who belonged to the tribe of Judah, went with his wife,

Naomi, and their two sons to live in the land of Moab. After a while their two sons married daughters of the Moabites, the name of one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth. A few years later Elimelech and his sons all died, and poor Naomi was left all alone in a strange country. She, therefore, decided to go back to her old home. When she told her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, what she was about to do, they said they would go with her. Naomi asked them not to do that but to go back to their father's house. "It will be hard for you," she said, "to go with me to a new country; why should you do that for my sake?" Upon this, Orpah kissed Naomi and went away. But Ruth had become very fond of Naomi and had learned to like her ways much more than she liked the ways of her own people, and so she said: "Please do not ask me to leave you. Let me go wherever you go and live wherever you live; I want your people to be my people, and your God my God." Naomi was so much carried away by Ruth's love and kindness that she cried.

The two lonesome women then started out on their long journey and came to Bethlehem,



"Do not ask me to leave you!"

Naomi's former home, just about the time of the harvest. When the people of Bethlehem saw Naomi they could hardly believe that it was she, for she was young and beautiful when she left, and now she looked old and was in poor health. But the noble Ruth had made up her mind to care for poor Naomi and to try and make her comfortable.

Now, one of the laws which Moses had given the Israelites said that during harvest time the poor could go to any field and pick up whatever was dropped or forgotten by those who gathered the grain. Ruth knew this law of the Israelites, and so, without losing any time, she went to the first field she saw, her mind made up to work as hard as she could in order to pick up enough grain for both Naomi and herself.

Ruth and Boaz.

HE field to which Ruth had come belonged to a rich and kind man by the name of Boaz, who was related to Naomi's husband. When Boaz came to his field, Ruth could tell that he was a good and

kind man, for he said "good morning" and spoke friendly to the people who worked for him. As Boaz watched the gentle Ruth going about the field working so hard to pick up whatever grain she found, he asked if anyone knew her. When he found out who she was—the people of Bethlehem had already heard how kind Ruth had been to Naomi and how she would not part from the poor old woman in her trouble—he walked over to talk with her. Her good manners showed him what a fine woman she was and so he wanted to help her. But, of course, he would not insult her by offering her charity, and so he simply told her that she could stay in his field during the whole harvest and asked her to take her meals with his people in the field. Ruth thanked him and, coming from a country where people were not kind to strangers, she asked him why he was so kind to her. Boaz said that he wished he could do more for her, as he had heard how nicely she had acted towards Naomi. He was sure, he said, no one could be more kind to her than she had been to poor Naomi. Meanwhile he told his people to drop purposely as much corn as Ruth could pick up.

When Ruth came home that evening, Naomi asked her in whose field she had gathered all that grain and, when Ruth told her she had been working in a field which belonged to a man by the name of Boaz and that Boaz had received her very kindly, she was delighted and told Ruth that Boaz was a relative of theirs. Every day now Ruth used to go to the field of Boaz, and every day Boaz liked her more and more.

When the harvest was over, Boaz came to see Naomi and told her that there was some land which had at one time belonged to her husband and promised to buy it back for her. This was, of course, good news to Naomi, for she was very anxious in some way to provide a good home for that sweet young woman, Ruth, who had given up her country and her people for her sake. But Boaz had some other good news to tell Naomi which pleased her even more. Can you guess what that was? Well, he told Naomi that he loved Ruth very much and that he wanted to marry her, if she would have him. Would she have him? Why, Naomi did not have to ask Ruth about that, for she knew that Ruth loved Boaz as much as Boaz loved her.

A few days later Ruth was married to Boaz. Naomi went to live with them, and there was never a happier home in all Palestine than the home of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz

Eli.

ET us go back now and find out what happened to the Israelites after Samson's death. The next Judge we hear about is an old man by the name of Eli. This man Eli was both Judge and High Priest. And he was a very good and kind man.

Now, kindness is a very fine thing, but one must know how to use it. A father, for instance, may be very kind to his children. But he must know how to use his kindness, otherwise he will spoil them. And that is just what Eli did. He had two sons who were wild boys and behaved badly when they were young, and Eli was too kind to correct or punish them, and so they grew up to be bad men. Eli saw now the mistake he had made, and it worried him very much, but it was too late to change matters.

One day, as Eli was sitting near the door of the temple, a man named Elkanah, and his

wife, Hannah, came to the temple to pray. The faces of these two people looked sad and they were very unhappy because they had no children. Eli wondered why they looked so sad and unhappy and, when they told him, he felt very sorry for them. "I wonder which is better," he said to himself, "to have no children at all or to have children who turn out to be bad." "If I have a son," Hannah said to Eli, "I shall give him to you and let you bring him up to be a good and learned man so that he might some day become the leader of our people." "May God give you your wish," Eli said to Hannah, but to himself he said: "I would certainly bring him up better than I brought up my own sons."

A year later a son was born to Hannah and Elkanah, and they named him Samuel. True to her promise, Hannah brought the little boy to Eli and left him in his care.

Samuel.

AMUEL was growing up to be a fine boy. Being all the time right there in the temple under the care of Eli, he really had every reason to be a good boy.

And he learned ever so many things about God and about God's laws. He could see that Eli's sons were bad men and he felt sorry, O, so sorry, for his kind old teacher, Eli.

One night when he had lain down to sleep—Eli had also gone to sleep and all was quiet in the temple—he was thinking about Eli and those sons of his. Just then it seemed to him that he heard someone calling him. Some other boy might have lain there and waited to find out whether he had really been called. But Samuel at once jumped up and thinking it was Eli who had called him, ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." But Eli told him that he had not called him, and so he went back to bed.

Again, as he lay there, thinking about Eli and his sons, he thought he heard his name called, and again he ran to Eli but was told that Eli had not called him. When this happened a third time and Samuel asked Eli whether he had called him, Eli told him not to get up again but to lie still and just listen to the voice that he thought called his name. Eli felt sure that it was God's voice within Samuel speaking to him, the voice which

speaks to all of us but to which only those who are good and wise try to listen.

When he thought he heard his name called again, he did not get up but just lay there, thinking and thinking all about those wicked sons of Eli's and, at last, something seemed to tell him—it was God's voice within him—that something sad was going to happen to those bad men, and to the Israelites, too, for allowing them to act as they did. He felt sure that they could not go on much longer living and acting as they did.

In the morning when Samuel got up—he looked sad because he felt sorry for Eli—Eli asked what it was that he had been thinking about during the night and whether he did not hear God's voice telling him something that made him look so sad. Samuel, you may be sure, did not like to tell Eli what he had been thinking about and what he had heard God's voice saying. But Eli had asked him, and he could not do anything else but tell the truth, even though it was very hard for him to do so. When Eli heard what Samuel had to say—he knew that it was only too true—he simply said: "God is just, let Him do what He thinks best."



"The young Samuel and the priest Eli"

Shortly afterward the Philistines came and attacked the Israelites. A great battle took place which ended very badly for the Israelites. They were beaten, and about four thousand men, the two sons of Eli among them, were killed, and the Ark of God was taken from them and carried to one of the Philistine cities. When poor Eli heard of all this, the shock was so great that he fell back in his chair and died. What seemed the worst part of the defeat to the Israelites was that the Ark of God had been taken away from them. But they did not have to worry about that very long, for the Philistines did not know what to do with it and sent it back. They thought it was an idol and at first they wanted to have it in one of their temples. But later on they came to be afraid of it, for, when anything went wrong or sickness broke out among them, they thought that the Ark had done it, so they put it on a cart, and sent it back to the Israelites.

The Israelites Want a King.

IN the meantime Samuel grew up to be the joy of his people. He was a good man, and he was as wise as he was good. He, of course, took Eli's place, and the people who came to the temple used to be delighted to meet Samuel and to listen to him. It did not take long before he became known all over the country as a great teacher—a prophet—and the Israelites were very happy to have such a fine judge and leader.

The Philistines, too, had cause to know that Samuel was a great leader, for, soon after Samuel became Judge, they attacked the Israelites and were driven back. The Philistines never forgot that attack, either. It was a very stormy day when they came up to fight the Israelites. The sky looked black; the winds blew fiercely, and there were terrible thunders and lightnings. But, encouraged by Samuel, the Israelites went forth to meet their enemy and fought so bravely that the Philistines had to flee.

After that all went well for a long time. Samuel kept on leading his people and teach-

ing them the laws of God. They had never been attached to a leader as much as they were now attached to Samuel. But, when Samuel grew to be an old man, the Israelites were worried. They had gotten tired, it seems, of having to look for a leader all the time and they knew of no one who could take Samuel's place after he was gone. Samuel had sons, but they were not as brave and wise as Samuel was. Then, too, all the other nations had kings, so they also wanted to have a king.

When Samuel heard that the Israelites wanted to have a king—they had come to him and asked him to find them one—he was very angry. He told them that they were foolish to want a king. "You must not want a king," he said to them, "just because the other nations have kings. Do you know that to have a king will mean that you will have to give up your freedom? If you have a king, you will simply have to be working for him and his family. He will make slaves of you. Let the other nations have their kings; you don't need any, God is your king."

The Israelites went away, but they were not satisfied. Then Samuel thought it all over and said to himself: "Why shouldn't I let

the people have a king? Maybe it will really be best for them to have a good and brave king. They might have more courage then to fight their enemies. Perhaps I was wrong when I scolded them for wanting a king.

When the Israelites heard that Samuel had changed his mind, they were very glad and asked him to find the right kind of man to rule over them. But this was not easy to do. The Israelites had never had a king, and Samuel wanted to be careful in choosing one. Unexpectedly, however, he met someone who, he was sure, would be the right kind of man to be ruler over the Israelites. And this is the way it happened:

There was a man belonging to the tribe of Benjamin whose name was Saul. He was a very tall, strong man, brave and full of courage. Also, he served God and loved his country and his people. Once his father lost some cattle and sent Saul and a servant to find them. They went from place to place looking for the cattle but could not find them anywhere. Afraid that his father might be worried if he stayed away too long, Saul told the servant that he thought they had better turn back and go home. But the servant said:

"The prophet (meaning Samuel) lives right near this place, let us go and ask him what to do about it." Saul thought this a good idea, and so he and the servant went to see Samuel. When Samuel saw Saul, he felt sure that there was not a better man among the Israelites to be chosen as king. He, therefore, invited him to have supper with him and to stay over night. "Do not worry about your cattle," Samuel said, when Saul told him what he had come for, "they have probably been found already. There is something more important that I want to talk to you about."

Saul.

WHEN Saul heard that Samuel wanted him to be king, he was very much surprised. He was a brave and good man, but he was not proud and did not think very much of himself. Perhaps that was just another reason why Samuel chose him, for one who is proud and thinks too much of himself cannot be trusted to do things for other people.

"Why have you chosen me," Saul said to Samuel, "I am a poor man and my tribe is the smallest among the Israelites." But Samuel told him that it did not make any difference whether he was rich or poor, or whether he belonged to a rich or a small tribe, as long as he was a good man and could lead his people as God would want him to lead them.

In the morning Samuel took Saul and his servant as far as the city gates and, telling the servant to go on ahead, he anointed Saul as king. What I mean by "anointed" is that Samuel poured some oil upon Saul's head and kissed him and blessed him. (All this used to be done in those days when one was made king). Saul then went on his way, and Samuel returned to his home.

When Saul came home, he did not tell anybody what had happened. But those who knew him noticed a change in him. They had always known him as a good man. But he had always been very plain and cheerful and now he looked so serious that the people wondered what was the matter and said that "he looked like a prophet."

A few days later Samuel called all the tribes together and told them that he had

chosen a king for them. But when he told them who it was that had been chosen, they looked all over for Saul and could not find him. You see, Saul thought so little of himself that he was afraid he could never be king and so he hid himself. However, he was found at last and brought before Samuel. Samuel then pointed to Saul and said to the people: "See him who has been chosen; there is not a better man in the land." And all the people shouted: "Long live the king!"

The Israelites were satisfied now. As yet Saul did not know what he was to do or how he was to act. Nor were all the tribes pleased to have him as their king. But it was not long before he had a chance of showing his courage and bravery.

Shortly after Saul had been chosen king, an old enemy, the wicked Ammonites, came and attacked one of the tribes. The Israelites felt that they were not strong enough to fight them, and so they sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, asking him to take his army away from their land. But that cruel king told the messengers that his army would let them alone only if the Israelites would let him put out their right eyes.



SAMUEL BLESSING SAUL

From this answer you can see how cruel and wicked the king of the Ammonites was and how much he hated the Israelites. As soon as Saul heard what had happened, the true spirit of a king showed itself in him. He felt very angry at the Ammonites and sent word to all the Israelites telling them that every one of them must join him and Samuel. The people came and Saul at once formed an army and went to meet the Ammonites. This had all been done so quickly that the Ammonites could hardly believe their own eyes when they saw the Israelites. A short but fierce battle then followed, and the Ammonites were badly beaten:

This great victory, the quick way in which Saul had gathered the people and the courage with which he had fought, showed the people that Saul was the right kind of man to be their king. Samuel, too, was glad that he had made such a good choice. For this reason all the tribes came together at a place called Gilgal and celebrated a feast during which all promised to obey Saul.

As the feasting was going on, Samuel arose to speak and, when the people saw their beloved leader and teacher standing up, they

became quiet and listened: "Look," said Samuel, "I am old and gray. From the time when I was a young man until now have I led you. Have I ever harmed or wronged anyone?"

When the people heard this, they shouted: "No No! You have never harmed or wronged anyone!"

"Well, then," Samuel went on, "I have done all I could for you. Even when you asked for a king I chose one for you, and here he is. All I ask of you is that you remember all the great things which God has done for you and serve Him in truth and with all your heart. If both you and your king will be true to your God and obey His commands, all will be well with you and God will bless you and you will enjoy peace and happiness."

Saul's Offense.

SAMUEL'S speech in which he asked both the king and the people to obey God's laws and to do what was right was necessary. A king must do what is right and obey all good laws as much as anyone else, for a king cannot do as he pleases any more than other people can.

Now, the period of the Judges was over. Samuel, as you know, was the last Judge. For the first time the Israelites were ruled by a king. Everything depended now on the way the king would act, whether he would do as he pleased or as he should. Saul was a brave man and a good leader. He had won that great battle against the Ammonites and soon drove many of the other wicked nations out of the land. He also had two great generals, the one was his son, Jonathan, and the other his cousin, Abner. But the worst enemy of the Israelites, the Amalekites, who were the most cruel and wicked of all the nations in and around Canaan, were still in the land. The next thing Saul had to do, therefore, was to lead his army against the Amalekites.

Samuel now came to Saul and told him that he must not rest until every Amalekite—not only the people but the cattle and the flocks and everything that belonged to that wicked nation—was driven out of the country. As long as one of them, even one, was left in the land, Samuel said, idol worship and crime would never stop.

Like a brave king, Saul now led his mighty



"David was a shepherd-boy"

army against the terrible enemy. The battle began, and Saul and his men fought so bravely and the Amalekites were so badly beaten that they fled in wild confusion. But Saul did not do as Samuel had told him to do and as he knew he should do. Instead of driving every Amalekite out of the country, he allowed Agag, the king, to remain and took also some cattle and sheep that belonged to the enemy.

When Saul and his men returned from the battlefield, rejoicing that they had won a great victory, Samuel came to meet them, and Saul told him that he had done all that Samuel had told him to do. "Where do all these sheep and cattle come from?" Samuel asked. Saul now saw his mistake and hardly knew what to say. He tried to excuse himself by telling Samuel that he had not taken these for himself but that he meant to offer them as a sacrifice to God. But Samuel was angry and said: "What is the good of sacrifices if you don't do what is right? God does not want your sacrifices; He wants you to obey His laws. You have not acted as you should have acted and you are no longer fit to be king over the Israelites."

Poor Saul! He felt sorry enough now and said: "I have done wrong. I am sorry that I did not do what I should have done." But Samuel felt that Saul could not be trusted any more, and so, although he pitied him, he could only repeat: "You are no longer fit to be king over the Israelites."

David.

SAMUEL now had to find a new king for the Israelites. It made Samuel very unhappy that the man who he had thought would make a good king had turned out to be one who could not be trusted. He felt sorry to have to look around for another man. But it couldn't be helped; he had to do it. "Where could the right man be found?" Samuel asked himself and thought over every man he knew and everyone he had ever met. Just then he happened to remember a young shepherd boy whom he had once seen at Bethlehem. This boy, whose name was David, and whose father, Jesse, was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz, Samuel now thought would some day be just the man to

rule over the Israelites. David, as Samuel well remembered, was not a very strong looking boy and not very tall, but he was such a bright and noble fellow. He was kind and very thoughtful and could play the harp and sing beautifully.

As Samuel thought of David, something seemed to tell him—it was God's voice within him—that he must choose David as the next king. He, therefore, went to Jesse and told him that he wanted to see his son. Jesse felt honored that the prophet had come to see his son and called in his eldest son who was tall and strong and very good-looking. But Samuel was not the man to be deceived by good looks, and so he told Jesse that this was not the one he had come to see. One after the other the sons of Jesse—six in all—were now called in, but the one Samuel wanted was not among them. "Have you no other children?" Samuel asked. "Yes," Jesse answered, "I have another son; he is the youngest and takes care of my sheep." "Send for him at once," Samuel said.

When David came, Samuel recognized him and, without saying anything to him, he anointed him. David's father and brothers

watched Samuel anointing the young shepherd, but neither they nor David himself knew what it all meant.

In the meantime a great change had come over Saul. He had never been the same man since the day when Samuel told him that he was no longer fit to be king. He kept on thinking about it all the time, and it used to make him sad to know that he had thrown away his chances of being a great king and of freeing his country from all enemies so that his people could always have peace. His courage, too, began to leave him and at times his sadness and worry were so great that he felt sick.

And Saul was not the only one who felt worried. Saul's servants had noticed for a long time that he was very unhappy and finally, when those spells of sadness and sickness began to come oftener and oftener all the time, they asked Saul to let them find someone to play the harp and to sing for him so as to drive his sadness away. The king gave them permission to look for someone who could play and sing—he was glad enough to let them do anything they could to make him forget his troubles. Just then one of the

servants said that he knew a shepherd boy who was a fine musician and could play and sing beautifully. The shepherd boy was then sent for and brought to the king's palace and, whenever the king felt sad and worried, he would play and sing for him, and the king would become cheerful again. This shepherd boy was none other than David.

David and Goliath.

SAUL did not feel now as though he had the strength and courage to fight the enemies of his people. Yet the time soon came when he had to fight them. He was still king and had to lead and protect his people. And the Philistines were now giving the Israelites much trouble. They had once been defeated by Saul, but they gathered a larger army and attacked the Israelites again. There was nothing, therefore, left for Saul to do but to call his people together and to lead them against the enemy.

In a few days everything was made ready for battle and the Israelites were facing the Philistines, each army standing on a moun-

tain, a valley separating them from each other. As both armies were standing there, each waiting for the other to make the attack, a very tall and strong and fierce-looking Philistine named Goliath, who was known as a giant, stepped forward, wearing a brass helmet and carrying a brass shield and a long spear and called over to the Israelites: "What is the use of your standing there? I am a Philistine and you are all supposed to be brave soldiers of Saul. Choose you an Israelite and let him come over and fight with me. If he kills me, the Philistines will be your slaves and you shall rule Canaan; if I kill him you will be our slaves and the Philistines will rule Canaan." When the Israelites saw this giant, they were very much frightened, and Saul trembled.

Day after day Goliath now came forward and repeated the same thing and called the Israelites cowards because no one dared to come over to fight with him. And it really did not seem as though any one could have the courage to fight that terrible Philistine. But one man among the Israelites did have the courage to do it, one whom nobody ever expected to do such a thing. And who do you

uppose it was?—David. He had returned home to keep his father's sheep again when war broke out. His three eldest brothers had joined Saul's army. When several days passed and Jesse did not hear from his sons, he became worried about them and sent David to take some food to them and to find out how they were. David hurried to the place where Saul's army was, found his brothers and gave them the food he had brought for them. Just then the giant came forward again and called the Israelites all sorts of names because no one would fight with him. "What is this all about?" David asked. "Why, don't you know," said one of the soldiers, "here is a chance to get rich, for, whoever kills that giant will get a great deal of money from our king, and the king's daughter, the pretty Merab, for a wife, too." "We are in the right," said David, "and it is a shame that we let that wicked Philistine talk to us that way." The soldier who heard David say all that looked at him with surprise. It seemed strange that a young man like David should talk as though he was not at all afraid when everyone else even the king, was frightened. But, if that soldier was only surprised at David, David's

eldest brother, who had been noticing the way his youngest brother had been behaving, was angry at him. "What are you standing around here for?" the brother said to David, "why haven't you gone back to your sheep? I believe that you just wanted to see the battle and that's why you have come." "What have I done now," David answered, "haven't I a right to feel bad about the way that bully is talking to our people?"

David then turned away and kept on asking one soldier after another why no one had the courage to go up against the Philistine. The soldiers were surprised at the way David talked and, finally, the king heard about it and sent for David. "I am told," said the king to David, "that you are not afraid of the giant." "No," said David, "there is no reason why any one should be afraid of him." The king just laughed. "My boy," the king said, "you cannot fight with that Philistine; what do you know about fighting? You are a young fellow, and he is a great man of war." "But I do know something about fighting," David said, "keeping my father's sheep, I sometimes have to fight against lions and bears, and I am no more afraid of that wicked

man than I would be of a lion or a bear."

Now, there was something so brave and manly about David that Saul made up his mind to try him out. "Go ahead, then," said Saul, "and here, take my helmet and my shield and my sword." David took these but did not feel comfortable, and so he asked the king to take them back. Dressed just as he was, wearing a shepherd's clothes, with a cane (the shepherd's staff) in his hand, a sling around his neck and a bag hanging down over his chest, he then ran down to a brook at the foot of the mountain, picked up five smooth stones which he put into his bag, and came back to face the giant. As he started to walk over towards the Philistine army, Goliath burst out laughing. He took it all as a joke. "Am I a dog?" he said, "that you come to fight me with a stick?" Come over here, and I will knock you down with my little finger." But David called over to him: "You are just a big bully, and I am not afraid of you. You come to me with all those weapons—a sword and a spear—and you think that they will help you, but I shall be helped by God. Our people are in the right and that's why God will help us. Your wicked people shall find



"Ho, ho, ho," laughed Goliath

out this day that our worship of the true God is a better weapon than your spear is or your sword."

David's words made Goliath very angry and he started towards David with his big sword. But he did not go very far, for David quickly took a stone out of his bag, put it into his sling and shot it right into the giant's forehead. A second later and Goliath lay stretched out on the ground—dead.

When the Philistines saw what had happened, they fled. But the Israelites pursued them and won a great victory over them.

Saul's Jealousy.

OU can imagine the excitement among the Israelites after the battle. Everybody spoke about David; everyone wanted to see him. As Saul's army was returning home, the women came out of the cities to meet the king and his soldiers, singing and dancing and rejoicing over the great victory. They praised Saul and his men, but most of all did they praise David. One of the songs

they were singing started with the words: "If Saul can kill a thousand, David can kill ten thousand." What they meant by that was, of course, that David was a greater hero even than the king. When Saul heard that, he felt angry. "What," said he, "they are saying that he is braver than I am, the next thing they may want to do is to make him king." Yet he told David not to go back to his home, but to remain in the palace.

David was now the friend and favorite of everybody, but especially of the king's son Jonathan. They became great friends on the very day after David had killed Goliath. Jonathan himself was also a very brave young man, and there was no jealousy in him. When he saw what David had done, he made up his mind to be his friend and took off his sword and his uniform and gave them to David. And from that day on they loved each other.

Meanwhile, the king began to feel sadder and more worried than ever. He was, of course, very sorry about the mistake he had made that time in the war with the Amalekites. And whenever he used to feel very sad, he would fret and be angry at the whole world. But since the day of the battle against the

Philistines, Saul felt worse than ever. It was not only sadness that made him feel so bad but also jealousy, for he was jealous of David. He had no right, of course, to feel jealous. He should really have been very thankful to David for the way David had risked his life for his country and his people. But everybody liked David very much, and the more everybody liked him, the more did the king become jealous.

As time went on, the king began to feel worse and worse, and at last his jealousy became so strong that he hated David. One day, when Saul felt so sad that he could not get up from his bed, David came to play the harp for him, as he always used to do whenever the king felt sad. But this time David's music did not cheer Saul nor make him forget his sadness. He happened to be thinking about the way the women praised David's heroism, and his jealousy and hatred of David became stronger and stronger, until there was not a feeling of kindness or justice left in his heart. All he knew was that he hated David and, becoming cruel, he picked up a spear that lay near him and threw it at David, saying: "I will kill you." But David dodged the spear and ran out of the room.

As soon as Saul began to feel better again, he was sorry for having tried to kill David and made up his mind not to give way again to his jealousy or anger. He, therefore, called David back and made him captain in the army. David was only too glad to come back, for he pitied Saul and wanted to help him all he could. Besides, as you know, he and Jonathan were great and true friends, and David did not like to be separated from his friend. But, even though David kept on being as nice to Saul as he possibly could be, Saul, it seems, could not shut out the jealousy from his own heart and soon again tried to think of a way to get rid of David.

Now, you remember, Saul had promised to let anyone who would kill the Philistine giant marry his daughter Merab. David had not even reminded the king of his promise. But Saul said to David that he would let him marry Merab if he attacked the Philistines, who were still making trouble for the Israelites, and carried off another victory. Saul hoped that David might lose his life on the battlefield, and that is why he said that. However, David called his men together and attacked the Philistines who were soon

defeated. But, when David returned to Saul, he found that Merab had in the meantime been married to another man. This was, of course, a mean thing to do, and it showed David that Saul had not at all meant to keep his promise. Yet David did not mind it very much for he had not really been in love with Merab, and he did not think that Merab had loved him. But Saul had another daughter, Michal, whom David did love and who loved David. Saul knew this, and so he thought he would take another chance of having David killed without having to do the killing. For this reason, Saul sent his servants to tell David that the king knew he was in love with Michal and really wanted him to marry her, but that the king was waiting until he, David, would once more gain a victory over the Philistines. David, I am sure, knew this time why the king wanted him to go to war again, but he did not mind it, for he loved his people and his country and, as long as those Philistines were still giving the Israelites a great deal of trouble, he did not mind going to war against them, even though it meant risking his life. So David again led his men against the Philistines and

carried off a victory. When David returned, he and Michal went to the king and asked him to let them get married. There was of course, nothing left now for Saul to do but to keep his word, and so David became the king's son-in-law.

David and Jonathan.

DAVID was now in Saul's family. Yet Saul hated him as much as ever and commanded his servants to kill him. How Jonathan felt when he heard this, you can easily imagine. Here was his own father trying to kill his dearest friend. What was he to do? He had to protect his friend, and yet he must also defend his father. To do both was, of course, very hard, but Jonathan made up his mind to try. He, therefore, told David to hide until he could speak to the king. And here is where we see what a fine man and how true a friend Jonathan was. He knew how angry his father was and, although he had always been a good and kind father, he knew also how rashly his father sometimes acted and how easily he gave way to his

temper during those spells of sadness and jealousy. How many men do you suppose would have dared to talk to Saul about David at such a time? Yet Jonathan was not the man to put off doing anything that he thought right because it was a hard thing to do, nor was he the man to leave his friend in the lurch because it was dangerous to take his part. He had made up his mind to do what he knew was right and so, without losing any time, he went to his father and said: "Why do you want to kill David? Think of the crime you would be committing. After all that he has done for you, you ought to be his best friend and not his enemy. Do you remember how glad you were after the battle with the Philistines and how you thanked him for risking his life and saving our people? Are you going to pay him for all that by murdering him?"

Poor Saul, these words went right through him. He knew only too well that his son was right. He was moved by the way Jonathan acted and ashamed of the way he himself had been acting. For a few minutes he could not say a word. But then he rose and, coming nearer to Jonathan, he said: "He

shall not be put to death, I swear he shall not."

Jonathan was delighted to hear that David's life would be safe again. He quickly went and brought David back to Saul, and Saul and David were friends again. Once more David took up his place in the army and, whenever the king felt sad he played on the harp before him, just as he used to do, and everything was forgotten. But that snake in Saul's heart, his jealousy, was not dead. After a while, when David and his men had again defeated the Philistines, who all the time kept on attacking the Israelites, Saul's wicked hatred returned, and he again threw his spear at David. But David escaped and fled to his home. The king then sent messengers to watch David's house, commanding them to kill David when he came out of the house. But, while the messengers were watching at the door, Michal let her husband down through a window, and he escaped.

Where was David to go now? He was no longer safe in the king's house; he was not safe in his own house, and he knew that he would not be safe in his parents' home. The only man who, he thought, could protect him

now was Samuel, and so he fled to Samuel and told him what had happened. Samuel received David very kindly and told him to stay with him. When Saul found out that David was with Samuel, he sent messengers to bring David back. But, when his messengers saw the prophet and were told that they must not dare to take David, they were frightened and returned without David. Other messengers were sent, and still others, but none of them had the heart to tear David away from the aged prophet. Saul himself then came, but even he, when he saw Samuel, felt his courage, and his wickedness, too, leaving him—he could not help thinking of the time when Samuel made him king and also of his last meeting with the prophet—and begged David to return, promising to be a true friend to him. But David had been deceived too often and no longer trusted Saul, and so, as soon as he came back, he went to see his friend Jonathan. Poor Jonathan! It was hard for him to believe that his father was so bad that he could never be trusted any more. Still, he could not think of asking his friend to stay in the house unless he really knew that there was no

danger. He, therefore, told David to hide in the field until he, Jonathan, could find out how his father felt towards David.

A couple of days passed, and David was still away. At dinner time, when Saul's family and the king's general, Abner, were seated at the table and David's chair remained vacant, Saul asked whether anyone knew where David was. "Yes," said Jonathan, "I forgot to tell you, David asked you to excuse him; he went to see his parents." But Saul became angry at Jonathan. "You are always taking David's part. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to be a friend of his when you know that your father hates him. You shall never be king as long as David lives. I want you to send for him at once. He must die."

But Jonathan meant to stand by his friend. "Why shall he die?" Jonathan asked, "what has he done?" This made Saul furious—so furious that he threw his spear at his son, trying to kill him.

Jonathan left the table and went out of the house. He was heart-broken. It was not about himself that he cared but about his friend. There was no way of saving David

now. His friend must flee, and he would, perhaps, never see him again.

When Jonathan brought the bad news to David, David felt so sad that he could hardly speak. But what was to be done? He had to flee or die. So, after saying good-bye to each other, both of them heart-broken and crying, they parted. And never was there a sadder parting than that of David and Jonathan, for there never were truer friends in the world than they were. In fact, even now, when we speak of two people as being very good and true friends, we say: "They are like David and Jonathan."

David's Generosity.

AFTER leaving Jonathan, David fled to a place called Nob. There was a small temple in that place and in that temple lived a priest by the name of Ahimelech, whom David knew. Tired and hungry, David went to the priest who gave him some bread to eat and allowed him to rest a while. But David did not think himself safe enough in that place, and so he asked Ahimelech for

a sword, which he saw hanging on the wall, and went on towards the mountains. In fact, even that short stay in the temple was reported to the king. For, one of the king's servants, whose name was Doeg, had seen David there and—it seems impossible that any one could be so mean—he went and told Saul on Ahimelech. When Saul heard that Ahimelech had given David bread and allowed him to rest, he sent for the priest and commanded his soldiers to put him to death. The soldiers, however, did not have the heart to kill that good man, who certainly did not deserve punishment for giving a hungry man something to eat, and so the king called in the same mean and wicked Doeg, and Doeg killed Ahimelech—I wonder who was the worse of the two, Saul or Doeg?

Meanwhile, as David continued his flight, everyone who was either in trouble himself and therefore felt sorry for David, or who was so poor that he could not earn a living, or who was angry at Saul for some wrong the king had done him, joined David, so that he soon had about four hundred brave and fearless men about him. With these David then went to a large cave in the mountains, which

was called the Cave of Adullam. But, before making up his mind what he and his men were to do from now on, David had to see that his parents would be placed where Saul could not reach them, for he was afraid that Saul might kill them. He could not think, therefore, of leaving them in Bethlehem, and yet they were too old to stand the mountain-life that he himself was leading now. So, the only thing that he could do was to take them out of the country. This was, of course, a dangerous thing to do, as Saul might easily find it out. But David was too good a son to be afraid when it came to saving the lives of his parents, and so he crossed the Jordan with his parents and took them to the land of Moab, the country, you remember, from which his father's grandmother, Ruth, had come.

No sooner had David returned to his men than there was something else for him to do which was very dangerous, but which he was not afraid to do for the sake of his people. He heard that the Philistines had attacked one of the cities of Judah and had stolen all the wheat and cattle they had found there. "Up," said David to his men, "we must go after those robbers." His men tried to tell



DAVID AND JONATHAN

him that it would be too dangerous to do anything like that, not on account of the Philistines, but on account of Saul. But David told them that nothing was too dangerous, if they could only save those poor people of Judah and get back for them the things that the Philistines had stolen. The men obeyed, and the Philistines were quickly put to flight. But his men had been right. It was a daring thing to do, for Saul heard about it and knew now David's hiding-place, and so, with three thousand of his soldiers, he at once started out for Adullam. He was mistaken, however, if he thought that David was going to remain there now that he was sure Saul could find him.

So, quickly, David and his men gathered all their belongings and left the cave. In the meantime, the noble Jonathan had run ahead of his father to warn David and to encourage him, and, as David came out, the two friends met and, oh, how glad they were to see each other again, even though they could be together only a few minutes this time!—the last few minutes they ever spent together.

David's Loyalty.



WHEN Saul and his men came to Adullam and did not find David there, they kept on hunting for him for several days until they were all tired and went into a cave to rest. In a few minutes Saul and all his men, including Abner who was supposed to keep watch over the king, were fast asleep. And it so happened that this was the same cave in which, farther in, David and his men had been hiding. You can imagine how David felt at first when he heard the king's voice so near him. But after a while he noticed that all was quiet, and coming up noiselessly to them, he found the king and his men fast asleep. And what do you think David did? Kill Saul?—No, he did not. Poor David, we could hardly blame him if he had done it. For no reason at all Saul had all the time been trying to kill him. Even now, though he could escape this time, he was not sure that Saul would not yet find him and kill him. Here was his chance, then. He could put an end to all his troubles, and no one would blame him for it. In fact, his men said to him: "Here is your chance. Your enemy is in your hands. Kill him, and you will save your own

life." But David said: "No, I will not do any such thing. He is my king, and I shall not put my hand upon him. He will die when God wants him to die, but I will not kill him." Was it not noble of David to act that way? I wonder how many men would have acted the way David did. Why, even Saul had to admit, when he found out what had happened, that David had acted nobly. And this is the way Saul found it out: .

Before leaving the cave, David cut off a piece of Saul's coat and took that and the king's spear with him. He and his men then went up a hill, and David called as loud as he could: "Abner, Abner!" Abner woke up. "Who is that calling?" he asked. "You are a fine soldier," David said, "to go to sleep when you are supposed to guard the king. He might have been killed. Look and see if you can find the king's spear." The noise woke Saul. "Is this David talking?" Saul asked. "It is, my lord," said David, "why do you pursue me, what have I done? You believe that I am your enemy, but look here; you were in my power a while ago; here is a piece of your coat. I could have cut your head off as easily as I cut off this piece of

your coat, and some of my men told me that I ought to kill you, but I would not lay my hands on you. Am I your enemy, then? God knows, you are doing me a great wrong."

Now, how do you suppose Saul acted when he heard these words? You remember, when he was made king he was a good and kind man. He became bad and cruel only through jealousy. And now, it seems, in those few moments his heart became changed again when he heard David speak, and he burst out crying. "David," my son," he said, "I am ashamed of myself. You have certainly acted nobly to let your enemy go unharmed. You have paid me for being bad to you by being good to me. Return, my son, I shall never again try to hurt you. I have been very foolish; I have made an awful mistake. Forgive me."

The Death of Saul.

AVID was glad to see the king's heart changed. But he could not think of going back to him. "If he will only let me alone," David thought, "I shall be satisfied." And, I am sorry to say, Saul did

not let him alone. When he asked David to return and promised never to hurt him, Saul really meant it. But after a while the feeling of jealousy and fear came back to him and with it the wish to kill David. The truth is, Saul was now beginning to feel helpless. Samuel, the only man to whom he might have gone for advice and encouragement, the only man, too, who, Saul knew, could have stopped the Israelites in case they wanted to make David king while he, Saul, was still alive, had died. The brave Jonathan was still with him, but, having treated David the way he did, he was not sure that even Jonathan loved him. The Philistines, too, were worrying him, for, seeing that the king and his men were busy hunting for David, they were gathering a large army and were preparing to attack the Israelites. It was pitiful to see Saul, who, as you know, was once a brave and wise man, so helpless and lonely now. Why, he felt so helpless that he asked advice of anybody that came along and at one time went to see an old woman who was known as the "Witch of Endor" to ask her advice.

In the meantime, David's little army was getting larger and stronger—he had now

about six hundred men—and he was able to protect his people better than Saul and his thousands of soldiers could. The robber nations who had been in the habit of stealing cattle and wheat from the Israelites were afraid to come near David, and so the Israelites felt safer when David and his men were somewhere in the neighborhood. You must not think, however, that all the Israelites really appreciated what David did for them. At one time, for instance, when David and his men were out of food and water, and he sent to a rich farmer by the name of Nabal, whose cattle and grain he had a number of times saved from the hands of enemies, to ask him for some bread and water, Nabal who it seems, was a miser, refused. David was, you may be sure, very angry when he heard it, and if it were not for Nabal's wife—Abigail was her name—a wise and kind-hearted woman, who went and took some food and water to David, Nabal would have paid dearly for his meanness. But most of the Israelites were glad enough to have David and his men near them. And the enemies of the Israelites were beginning to be more and more afraid of him. Only the Amalekites, that

cowardly nation which was afraid to fight and always waited for a chance to kill and rob the Israelites on the sly—the same nation which, you remember, stole up behind the Israelites as they were marching through the wilderness and killed many of the old people and the children—only then dared to come to the place where David and his men had been staying and to attack their families. It was at a time when David and his men were all away from the city so that there was no one to protect it. When the Amalekites found it out, they came and burned the town, and carried off the women and the children and everything they could lay their hands on. When David and his army returned and saw what had happened, the men cried. But David told them that crying and complaining would not get them back what they had lost, and so they ran after the Amalekites and overtook them just as they had settled down by the road for a great feast. A battle then followed and the Amalekites were defeated, and whatever they had stolen from David's men, and more, too, was taken away from them.

All this, however, did not make Saul happier nor more friendly towards David. As he

felt himself getting weaker, it made him feel worse and more angry to hear that David was getting stronger. And so, he made up his mind once for all to get David out of the way. But, just as he called his army together, intending to go and find David, the news reached him that the Philistines were marching to attack the Israelites. Poor Saul was certainly not prepared to fight the immense Philistine army now. His courage was gone, and, what was even worse, his faith in God's help was gone too. Oh, if he could only have the brave David for his captain now! But it was too late even to ask David, and there was nothing left for him to do but to lead his army against the Philistines. The battle was fierce. The Israelites fought with courage and bravery. Jonathan surprised everybody with his heroism. Even Saul seemed to have gotten his old courage back again. But all that was of no use. The Philistines were everywhere victorious; the Israelites were falling right and left, and both Saul and Jonathan were killed.

When David heard the sad news, he was heart-broken and cried bitterly. He could hardly believe that both Saul and Jonathan were dead. It was such a terrible blow

to him that he cried aloud and fasted all day, and his men cried and fasted with him. And the words he spoke, or rather sang in a very sad tune, are so full of sorrow and at the same time so beautiful that they have been preserved (they have been known as the "Song of the Bow") and even now people often have to cry when they read them.

Sad, is it not? that the first king of the Israelites, who had started out as a good man and with such a bright future, whose name might have come down to us as one of the greatest leaders among the Israelites, should have spoiled his whole life through jealousy, and that he should have come to such an end. Sad, too, it is that the dear young Jonathan who could have been so happy with his friend, and who could have done so much for his people and his country, should have been killed by those wicked Philistines!



Review of Most Important Lessons.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The First Commandment.

I AM THE LORD, THY GOD, WHO BROUGHT THEE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE (slavery).

The Second Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BESIDES ME. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, in order to bow down to them or to serve them. For I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; but showing mercy unto the thousands of those that love me and keep my commandments.

The Third Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD, IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS WHO TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN.

The Fourth Commandment.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOR AND DO ALL THY WORK; BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD, THY GOD. On it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates.

The Fifth Commandment.

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD HATH GIVEN THEE.

The Sixth Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT MURDER.

The Seventh Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. (This means that a husband must not be untrue to his wife, nor a wife untrue to her husband.)

The Eighth Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

The Ninth Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR.

The Tenth Commandment.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET (envy) thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO THY NEIGHBOR.

The Meaning of the Commandments.

The first commandment tells that there is a God. It was necessary to tell the Israelites that, because in those days there were some people who did not know it. For this reason the Israelites were told also that the God is the same who brought them out of the land of Egypt and freed them from slavery, and as they were sure about their having been freed from Egypt, so, the commandment told them, they could feel sure also of God.

The second commandment tells that there is only one god, and that only one God must be worshiped. For this reason the Israelites were told that they must not worship any idol, whether that idol be something that is in the heaven above, as the sun, the moon, or the stars—which, as you know some people worshiped in those days and still worship today—or something that is on the earth beneath, as animals, stones or images of people—which were worshiped then and are still worshiped by certain people now—or something that is in the water, as fishes and

sea-monsters, which were supposed to be gods. This commandment also tells us how kind and loving God is, for He has made the world so that only a few, our children and maybe our children's children, suffer by the bad things we do (visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generations) but thousands are helped by the good things we do (showing mercy to the thousands of those that love me and keep my commandments).

The third commandment teaches us the proper respect for God for we must never mention His name except when we pray to Him.

The Fourth commandment teaches us that everyone must do some work (six days shalt thou labor). But it says also that we must not make slaves of ourselves, nor of others, by working or making others work all the time. For this reason it tells us that we must rest one day out of every seven, and that we must also give others a chance to rest one day in the week. Yet, just to rest on the seventh day is not enough if we wish to keep this commandment for "the seventh day is the

Sabbath of the Lord," and so we must worship God and pray to Him and think of His laws on that day.

The fifth commandment, "honor thy father and thy mother," which includes not only our parents, but also our teachers and all those who help and benefit us, teaches us always to act so that they may be honored through us.

The sixth commandment tells us that we must never do anything to destroy or help to destroy life.

The seventh commandment tells us that we must never destroy or help destroy the happiness of our own home or of other people's homes.

In the eighth commandment we are taught to protect other people's property, for stealing does not mean only burglary, but it means anything we might do to gain something that belongs to somebody else.

By the ninth commandment is meant that we must not say anything bad about

other people, for to give people a bad name is just as wrong as being a false witness against them in court.

The tenth commandment tells us that we must not even have wrong thoughts or wrong wishes, for God knows our thoughts and our wishes just as He knows our acts and our words.

The Festivals.

HE main festivals which we celebrate are:

Passover, Pesach, in Hebrew, is celebrated by us to commemorate the "passing over" of the Israelites from slavery to freedom. It begins on the date of the exodus, which is the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month "Nisan," and lasts for seven days, that is, to the twenty-first of Nisan. During these seven days no bread is eaten. A sort of cracker, especially prepared and called "unleavened bread" ("Matzoh," in Hebrew), takes its place. The reason for eating this sort of bread is that it helps us to remember that the Children of Israel had to leave Egypt in such haste that they could not

even take the time to bake bread for the journey in the usual way, but quickly baked a sort of thin cracker and fled.

There are other things also which help us to remember the time when the Children of Israel gained their freedom. For instance, we eat bitter herbs, such as horse-radish, to be reminded of the bitter lives the Israelites had to lead in Egypt, and a mixture of fruits, spices and nuts (called "Haroseth," in Hebrew) which looks like clay and helps us to remember the bricks and mortar with which the Israelites worked when they were slaves in Egypt. These things are eaten on the first evening of the feast when a home service is held, called "Seder." During this service the family is seated around the table and listens to the story of Exodus. After that, supper is taken, and all present join in singing songs and reading prayers in which thanks are offered to God for having given the Israelites their freedom.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS (Shabuoth, in Hebrew) is celebrated on the sixth day of the Hebrew month Sivan in memory of the giving of the Ten Commandments.

The reason it is called the Feast of Weeks is because it comes just seven weeks after Passover.

Later on, when the Israelites settled in their own country, Palestine, they celebrated Shabuoth also as a harvest feast. For this reason it is called also "The Feast of the First Ripe Fruit." In our own time the feast is celebrated in memory of the giving of the Ten Commandments. And there is something that makes the festival especially beautiful for Jewish children, for on that day we have Confirmation, and many Jewish children, after studying God's laws and commandments, repeat the words which the Israelites spoke at Sinai: "All that God has commanded, we will do and obey."

The NEW YEAR'S DAY (Rosh Hashanah, in Hebrew), which is celebrated on the first day of the Hebrew month Tishri, marks the beginning of the religious year, when we try to find out whether there is not something wrong we did in the past year, so that we might make up our minds to do better. On that day we, of course, have services in our Temples and we pray to God for life and

health. During the service a trumpet, which is made of a ram's horn and called Shofar, in Hebrew, is blown to announce the New Year. This is done because all great events used to be announced in olden times by the blowing of a ram's horn.

The DAY OF ATONEMENT (Yom Kipur, in Hebrew) is celebrated on the tenth day of Tishri, nine days, then, after the New Year's Day. The Day of Atonement is different from any other festival because it is both a feast and a fast day, for on that day we fast and pray and ask God to forgive us for whatever wrong we have done in the past and promise to act rightly and justly in the future. The Day of Atonement, therefore, marks the end of the ten days, beginning with the New Year's Day, in which we are to give up all bad habits and acts and make up our minds to do only good in the future.

The FEAST OF BOOTHES (Succoth, in Hebrew) is celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of Tishri in memory of the time when the Israelites were in the wilderness, when they lived in booths, or tents, and were always protected by God. Later

on, after the Israelites settled in Canaan, they celebrated this feast also as the Harvest Festival, and so we are to have, during this festival, booths which are covered with evergreen and have different fruits, grains, and vegetables hung all over. In these booths we are to take our meals and to spend whatever time we can. In the Temple, too, the symbols are fruits and plants. During the morning service we take a citron in our left hand and a palm branch, tied together with myrtle and willow branches, in our right hand and say a prayer in which we thank God for the fruits and plants and vegetables that He makes grow.

On all of these festivals, which always start the evening before, we are commanded to be glad and to rejoice before God and also to remember the poor so that they, too, may be glad and rejoice before God.

Some Laws of Moses.

E must look to God as our loving father who wants us to act rightly and justly.

We must be grateful and not proud when we are prosperous, and when we are in trouble we must not lose courage, but hope and pray that God may help us.

We must do useful work by which we shall do good to ourselves and others.

We must try not to be selfish, and we must always be honest and truthful.

We must be just to all people.

We must not hate anybody.

We must do all we can to save the lives of other people when they are in danger.

We must do all we can to protect other people's property.

We must help the poor and the needy.

We must show respect to old people.

We must be kind to animals and not cause them any unnecessary pain.

We must not keep company with people who are in the habit of doing bad things.

David is Made King.

THE Israelites were now left without a leader. Saul had been killed and Jonathan, the only one of his sons who was good and brave enough a man to rule over the Israelites, had also been killed. Yet, more than ever did the Israelites need a strong leader now. The Philistines were getting more and more cruel every day. Other nations, too, were only waiting for a chance to attack the Israelites. The only man who could be trusted to lead his people against so many and such strong enemies was David. And so the men of Judah came to David, who was now about thirty years old, and asked him to be their king. But the other tribes wanted to show their love for their first king and chose Ishbosheth, a son of Saul, for their ruler. Two years later, however, after the death of Ishbosheth, David was made king over all the Israelites.

From now on things began to look brighter for the Israelites. They had really never been safe in their own land. They had never conquered the whole country, to begin with.

The nations who lived in Canaan were their enemies and always looked for a chance to rob and attack them. During the time when the Judges ruled over them they used to have peace for a short time, and then their peace used to be suddenly destroyed by their enemies. Their first king, Saul, had started out well, as you remember, and they hoped that he would in time free them from all their enemies. But Saul had wasted his life and strength through jealousy, and the Israelites were now as badly off as they had been before. In fact, they were really worse off. Half of their land was in the hands of the Philistines, and other nations were trying hard to take away from them what they had left. But, when they made David king, they at last had a man who could free them from their enemies, and make their country safe, and, under his rule, they became a mighty and powerful nation.

All this David could not do at once, of course. It took years before he could defeat all the enemies and drive them out of the land. But, every time any nation attacked the Israelites, David with his general, whose name was Joab, and his brave soldiers would come

forth and fight bravely until the enemy was defeated. In this way he succeeded in making the country safe at last so that the Israelites could live in peace. The Philistines were the first to be driven out and then one nation after the other of those who had so long given the Israelites much trouble was defeated in battle and made to leave the country. And you may be sure those nations deserved to be driven out, for they worshiped idols and were mean and cruel, robbing and killing people whenever they could. To show you how mean and wicked those nations were, let me tell you how one of them acted towards David. You remember, when David had to flee from Saul, he took his parents over to the land of Moab. The Moabites, who had always made believe that they were friends of David's family, promised to take care of his parents. But, what do you suppose they did? As soon as David left, they killed his parents. When David heard it, he could hardly believe that any nation could act so meanly and, when he became king, he punished them for their mean act.

Other people who now came to feel David's power were the Jebusites. I have never told

you anything about these people because no one had ever dared to go up against their city, Jebus, which was built upon high hills and could be entered only by gates from the valleys below. But they had been troubling the Israelites very much, and so David now took his brave men up those hills and drove out the Jebusites. Then he made that beautiful city which from that time on has been called JERUSALEM, the capital of his kingdom and brought the Ark there. He also had a beautiful palace built there for himself, and the part of the city in which he lived came to be called ZION.

David and the Cup of Water.

BUT, before I tell you any more about the brave things David did for his country and his people, I want to tell you of something that happened which will show you that David was as kind as he was brave. It was during one of the battles with the Philistines when he and his men were upon a hill near Bethlehem awaiting an attack from the enemy. They had been marching long and fast that day. The sun had been burning



"David, the Warrior King"

fiercely on those rocky mountains, and David was suffering from thirst. "Oh, for some water from the well of Bethlehem!" David said. His men heard it and at once three of them started down the hill. Between them and the well was the large Philistine army, but their love for their king was so great that they feared no enemy. Quickly, but at the risk of their lives, they broke through the enemy's army, got some water and, once more forcing their way through the Philistine army, brought it to David. David could hardly believe his own eyes when he saw those brave men coming up the hill with the cup of water. Had those men put their lives into danger just to get him some water? It seemed to him that they had risked too much for his sake, and so, although he was very, very thirsty, he would not drink that water, saying that he could not put it to his lips when he knew that those good men came near losing their lives in trying to fetch it.

Was not that kind of David to think so much of his men? Other kings were never as careful and thoughtful about the lives of their soldiers. No wonder all his people loved David so much.

David's Wrong.

NO human being is perfect, and even a man like David might do some wrong. You will be sorry to hear, I am sure, that this king of the Israelites, who had done so much for his people and his country and whom everybody loved, once did a great wrong. Among his brave soldiers was one whose name was Uriah. David, it seems, did not like Uriah, and so he sent a message to Joab, who was at that time commanding the king's army in a war against the Ammonites, telling him to place Uriah right in front of the army where he would be sure to be killed by the enemy. Joab obeyed, and Uriah was killed.

This was, of course, a terrible thing for David to do. It was just as bad as though he himself had killed Uriah. He had broken the sixth Commandment, and it makes us sad to think that the same David who had spared the life of Saul, although Saul was his enemy and wanted to kill him, that the same David who had refused to drink the water which his soldiers had gotten for him, because they came near losing their lives in trying to

get it, should have acted so cruelly. It simply goes to show that even a very good man is liable to make a very terrible mistake if he gives in to anger, or temper, or jealousy. But the difference between a good man who makes a mistake and does something that is wrong and a bad man who does something that is wrong is this: The bad man who has done something that is wrong will not listen to anyone and will not try at all to do better. He may not even feel sorry for what he has done and go on doing other things that are wrong. But the good man who has done wrong will feel sorry for what he has done and try to make up for it.

And this is just what David did. For a while he forgot all about the wrong he had done and even married Bathsheba, who had been Uriah's wife. It may be that he wanted to have Uriah killed just to be able to marry her. But, when he was reminded of what he had done, he felt very, very sorry. And the one who reminded him of it was a man by the name of Nathan, who was a prophet and lived in Jerusalem. When Nathan found out what had happened, he was brave enough (he could not have been a prophet if he had

not been brave and not afraid even of a king) to come to David and tell him what a terrible thing he had done. When Nathan reminded him of it, David became very angry; and at whom do you suppose? At the prophet?—No, at himself. He felt so sorry that he cried like a child. He was just heart-broken, and all he could say was: "I have sinned, I have sinned!" No man was ever more sorry or more ashamed of himself than David was as he stood there before the prophet, and he prayed to God to forgive him. He wished that he could be made all over again and prayed to God to give him a new heart. He knew, of course, that he could not take back what he had done and kept on being sorry for it all his life. But, he tried to make up for it by being as good and kind and just as any man could possibly be.

David and Absalom.



NE would expect that all went well with David now. His people lived in peace, and there were no enemies to trouble them. Palestine had become a famous country and Jerusalem a great city. All the tribes were united and, for the first time since they had come to Canaan, some of their neighbors, especially those called Tyrians (Phoenicians), who were known all over the world as fine mechanics and great business people, were very friendly to them. There was everything, therefore, to make both David and the Israelites very happy. But, what would you think of a man who destroyed the happiness of the king and the people by trying to kill David and to become king in his place? You would think such a man low and wicked, wouldn't you? Well, he was a very wicked man, worse really than you can imagine, for he was one of David's own sons, his eldest son, Absalom.

Absalom was a very handsome man, and David was very fond of him. The people, too, liked him very much, but he was as bad as he was handsome and very vain and selfish.

He was particularly fond of his long hair. David had always been very kind to him, but Absalom was too mean and selfish to appreciate his father's love and kindness. Day and night he kept on thinking of some way in which he could become king and went on telling everybody how much he would do for his people if he were king. He tried very hard to make friends, shaking hands with everyone he met and talking sweetly to everyone he knew. In this way he got the people to like him, and many really wanted him to be king.

As soon as Absalom noticed that he had succeeded in gaining many friends who would stand by him, he went and organized an army secretly and was preparing to march on Jerusalem and to attack his father. Imagine how David must have felt when he heard it. What hurt him more than anything else, of course, was that his own son, whom he loved so much, should try to do anything so mean and wicked. Yet, even now he was too fond of Absalom to fight against him, and so he fled from the city. Many of his friends followed him, and the priests took the Ark and came to join him. But David told the priests

that they should not have taken the Ark away from the Tabernacle and sent them back with it to stay in the city so that the service at the Tabernacle might not be disturbed.

As David and his men were passing among the mountains where a man by the name of Shimei lived, Shimei, most likely to gain the friendship of Absalom, came out of his house and began to throw stones at David and to curse him. One of David's men wanted to go over and kill that wicked man. But David said: "Never mind, if my son, my own child, tries to take my life, why should not this man, a stranger, act that way towards me? Let him alone, let him curse."

Meanwhile, David was hoping that his son would come to see the terrible thing he was doing and let him alone. But Absalom seemed to have no feelings in his heart, and when he had brought his army to Jerusalem and found that his father had fled, he and his army started out to find David so as to attack him. Still David did not want to make war upon his own son and his people and crossed the Jordan, thinking that this would satisfy Absalom. But, even though the king had left the country, Absalom did not give up and also

crossed the Jordan. There was nothing left for David to do, therefore, but to fight, and so he gathered his men together and sent them against Absalom. David himself did not go with his army and, as his men started, he said to the leaders: "Be careful, don't hurt my boy."

The two armies met in the forest of Ephraim and, in the battle that was fought there, Absalom's men were badly defeated and had to flee for their lives. Absalom himself also fled, but his long hair—that beautiful hair of which he had always been so proud—proved his downfall. He was on horseback, or rather on a mule, and, as he passed a big oak in the forest, his hair caught on the boughs of the tree, and the mule ran off and left him hanging in the air. One of David's men saw this and went and told Joab about it. Joab then came up and killed Absalom.

The battle was thus over, and Absalom, the wicked troublemaker, was out of the way. David could now return to his country and capital and live in peace again. You might think that he was glad to hear the news. But he was not. Even after his son had done a terrible wrong, he still loved him so much

that, when a messenger came and told him what had happened, he burst out crying and, as he cried and sobbed, he said: "O my son Absalom, O Absalom my son, my son!"

David's Death.

DAVID now returned to Jerusalem, and the people were happy to have their king back again. Even those who had joined Absalom were glad enough now to serve the noble king, for David had forgiven them for the way they had acted towards him. He forgave even the wicked Shimei, who had thrown stones at him and cursed him. For many years he now went on living in peace and ruling over the Israelites wisely and kindly, and the country was very prosperous. But there was one thing that worried him. His one wish was to build a grand and beautiful temple for the worship of God. He did not think it right that he and his family should live in a grand palace while the Ark was kept in a mere tent, as there was no temple in which God could be worshiped. But the prophet Nathan

told him that he was not the right man to build such a temple to God because his hands had shed blood. You see, David had been obliged to carry on many wars and to kill many people. This had to be done, as there was no other way to free the country from those wicked Canaanites. But Nathan felt that God did not want His temple built by a man who had killed people, even though he had been forced to do so. David was very sorry to hear that he could not build the temple which he wanted to build, but he obeyed the word of the prophet.

Meanwhile, the hard life David had been leading from the time when he was a mere boy began to make him look old and feel weak, and he knew that he had not long to live. So he called one of the priests and the prophet Nathan and asked them to anoint his son Solomon as king over the Israelites. Shortly after that, David became ill and, feeling that his end was near, he called Solomon to his bedside and said to him: "My son, listen to the words of your dying father. Be strong and show yourself a man. Follow the laws of God and keep the Commandments which our people received through Moses."

These were the last words of the great king, for, no sooner had he finished speaking than he closed his eyes and went to sleep—never to wake up again. And, as the people followed their beloved leader to his last resting place, they cried bitterly, for they knew that they should never again have as great a king to rule over them as David had been. And they were right. Never again did the Israelites have as great a king as David to rule over them. In later years, when they were in trouble, the Israelites often wished they had a king like David and, when they lost their country (I shall tell you about that some day), they kept on hoping that by and by they would have as great and good a leader as David had been, some descendant of David, perhaps, so that he might free them from their enemies and take them back to their own land, Palestine, where they could again become as mighty and powerful a nation as they had been in the days of David.

Solomon.

IF the Israelites had searched the whole country, they could not have found a better man than Solomon to rule over the great kingdom that was left by David. He meant to remember the dying words of his father—to be strong and to show himself a man. But, what he wished for more than anything else was wisdom so that he might rule over his people well and justly. This wish must have been in his mind all the time, for one night he dreamt that God had asked him to name what he wanted most and that he said: “I am young, O Lord, and I am to rule over a great people, give me wisdom, I pray, so that I may know how to lead my people.” You see, then, what Solomon wanted most of all. The wish to be wise must have been in his mind and in his heart all the time, and so, in his dream, he did not ask for riches nor beauty nor honor nor great power, but for wisdom. And he not only prayed for wisdom, but he was willing to work for it, and so he learned everything he could and, in time, he came to be known all over the world as the wisest king that ever lived.

Let me tell you just one story which will show you how wise Solomon really was: One day two women came to him with two children, a living child and a dead child. These two women had been living in the same house and a child had been born to each of them at about the same time. After a few days one of the children died and the two women began to quarrel about the living child, each of them saying that the living child belonged to her. To find out the truth in such a quarrel was certainly not easy. But Solomon soon found it out. He told one of his officers to bring him a sword and then he said: "Divide the living child in two and give half to the one woman and half to the other." "Oh, my lord," cried the woman whose child it really was, "let her have the child, please, do not kill it." But the other woman said: "Go ahead, divide it, then it shall be neither hers nor mine." This decided it for King Solomon. He knew at once to which of the two the child belonged, for, if the second woman had been the real mother, she would certainly have been satisfied to let the other woman have her child rather than to see it in pieces. Of course, Solomon did not mean to



"Solomon, the Wise"

divide the child at all and said it only to try out the two women. But they thought that he really meant it when he said that the child would have to be divided, and so Solomon was able to find out to whom the child really belonged.

When this and other wise things that Solomon did and said became known, people began to come from all over the world in order to see the king of the Israelites, to talk with him, to ask him questions, and to find out about his great wisdom. One of those who came to ask him questions and to find out about his wisdom was the Queen of Sheba, a very rich and beautiful woman. She had heard about Solomon and could not believe that anyone could be as wise as Solomon was said to be, and so she came to Jerusalem to find it out for herself. But, after she had seen Solomon and had spoken with him, she said that his wisdom was even greater than his fame, and so delighted was she at the way he had spoken and at the way he had answered some questions she had asked him that she made him a present of all the costly jewelry she had with her.

Solomon's Temple.



YOU can understand now why Solomon was so famous and why he was known as the wisest man in the world. But what made him famous more than anything else and that for which he shall always be remembered is not what he did for himself nor even his people and his country, but that which he did for the worship of God. You remember David wanted to build a temple to God and was told by the prophet Nathan that he was not the man to build such a temple. Nathan told him at the same time that perhaps his son who would rule after him would be able to build such a House of God. And so, when Solomon became king, the first thing he did was to make preparations for building a temple to God. He made up his mind from the start to get everything of the finest and the best for the building. He, therefore, sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, who had been a very good friend of David's, asking him to send workmen (the Tyrians, you remember, were known to be great mechanics and also cedar wood, which was the finest and most expensive wood that could be found, so that

he might build a great temple to God. Solomon did not want Hiram to give him all that of course, but offered to pay for the wood and the wages of the workmen, and so Hiram said that he would be glad to send him all the workmen and all the wood he wanted. Solomon then called together thousands of men among the Israelites to help the Tyrians (Phoenicians) in their work and, after three years, everything was ready to begin the building of the Temple.

For seven years the thousands of men were now busy on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, right close to the hill of Zion, building the House of God. It must have been a great sight to see so many masons and carpenters, working nicely and quietly at that great building, for everything—the big stones for the foundation and the cedar wood—was all prepared before it was brought to Jerusalem, so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any other tool that would make any noise, used at the building of the Temple. And you can see that Solomon was wise to arrange it that way, for, in the House of God there should never be any noise or sound heard except that of prayer, singing, or studying.

After seven years of hard work, the wonderful Temple was all finished, and Solomon called the people together from all over the country to see it. The joy of the Israelites was great, indeed as they looked at that new and beautiful House of God, divided, just like the Tabernacle, into three parts, but larger and, of course, much more beautiful. The Ark with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments were then brought up and placed into the Holy of Holys. And, when this had been done, Solomon offered a beautiful prayer to God, and the people celebrated a great feast for seven days. Never before had the Israelites felt as happy as they did during that week, for the Temple was to be a house of worship not only for the people of Jerusalem, nor for the Israelites alone, but for the whole world. The Israelites themselves had always been in the habit of coming to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate the festivals of Pesach, Shabuoth, and Succoth, and now, with that beautiful Temple there, many people of other nations were also sure to come to Jerusalem to worship the one true God.

Solomon's Reign.

HAVING built a House of God, Solomon now built a new and beautiful house also for himself and started to find ways of making the great and powerful kingdom that was left him by his father still greater and more powerful. He built a great navy and sent ships to all parts of the world, getting gold from one country, silver from another, ivory from still another. You will be able to imagine how far some of those ships had to go if I tell you that it took them three years to make the trip. Pretty soon the Israelites were doing business in every country of the world, and it was not long before they became a very rich nation and Solomon became a very rich king. The people were so well off that every Israelite could enjoy life under his own vine and his fig tree, and the king was so rich that he lived in a palace built of cedar wood and covered with gold, just like the Temple, and had a throne made of ivory and also covered with gold, and ever so many fine chariots and fast horses. In fact, there was not any nation at that time which was better

off than the Israelites, and there was not any king that was as rich as Solomon.

But, you know, when we have it too good, we often become spoiled. When people become too rich, they sometimes forget that there are other things to care for besides money and fine clothes and beautiful houses. At times, when people have everything they want, they become selfish and do not think of God nor of other people. And I am sorry to say that is just what happened to Solomon. He was a very wise man and, as you know, meant to worship God with all his heart. He built the beautiful Temple and offered the first prayer in it. But too much riches simply spoiled him, so that he married many wives, just as other kings used to do in those days (there are countries in which kings have many wives even now) and, as he grew older, he became careless about the worship of God and allowed some of his wives to worship idols.

You can imagine how the people felt when they saw their wise king becoming foolish in his old age. Some of them were now beginning to see that it was not a good thing for a king to be too rich and thought that they ought

not to pay as much as they had been paying to keep up the king's grand home and his many wives and servants and thousands of horses. Yet, they thought of all that David had done for them and of what Solomon himself had done for them, of the wonderful Temple he built and the navy he got together and the great books he wrote, for Solomon had written several great books, and so they remained true and faithful to him as long as he lived. In our next story you will find out, however, that, after Solomon died, they were not as true and faithful to his son as they had been to him.

Rehoboam.

AFTER the death of Solomon his son Rehoboam was to rule over the Israelites. But the people saw their chance now to stop paying so much towards keeping up the king's great court. So they came to Rehoboam and said: "Your father made us pay too much; if you promise that you will allow us to pay less than we have been paying, we shall let you be our king."

Rehoboam was surprised to hear the people talk that way and asked them to give him some time to think it over. What he really wanted was to ask some friends of his what he should do about it. So he first asked some old friends of his father's, men who used to be with Solomon a great deal and knew the people very well. These men advised Rehoboam to promise that he would do as the people wanted him to do. "If you will be nice to your people now," they said, "and show them that you mean to treat them kindly, they will always be nice to you." But Rehoboam somehow did not like their advice and asked some of his own friends, young men who did not know the people very well and who did not even stop to think before they spoke but said right away: "Don't you let those people talk to you that way; show them that you are not afraid of them. Tell them that you will make them pay even more than your father made them pay." Rehoboam liked this advice better, and so he told the people what the young men said he should tell them. But this was a great mistake. Rehoboam should have known better than to take the advice of those young men. He

should have known that the older men, who had seen more of the world and were acquainted with the people, could give him better advice than those young men could.

When the Israelites heard Rehoboam's answer, they said that they would not have him for their king, and he could see that they meant what they said. Rehoboam was now sorry that he had not listened to the older and wiser men, for he knew now that he had made a mistake. But it was too late. The people became very much excited and would not even let him talk to them any more. And, without losing any time they went and chose a man by the name of Jeroboam for their king. Only two of the tribes stood by Rehoboam, Judah, the tribe to which he himself belonged, and the tribe of Benjamin, whose land lay near the land of Judah. So, instead of being united as they had been in the days of David and Solomon, the Israelites now became divided and, instead of one kingdom and one king, there were now two kingdoms and two kings. The kingdom over which Rehoboam ruled, and which had only two tribes in it, was from now on called the **KINGDOM OF JUDAH**, while the kingdom over which

Jereboam ruled, and which had all the other ten tribes in it, was called the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. And we shall see what a bad thing it was for the Israelites to be divided into two parts after they had become such a great and powerful nation.

The Divided Kingdom

HE powerful and united kingdom which all the great men from Moses to Solomon had worked so hard to build up was now divided. This meant that the Israelites could never hope to be as strong again as they had been before. You remember how often they had had to fight against their enemies and how they succeeded in defeating them only when they were all united and when all went forth together to fight for their country. Now, many of those nations were just as anxious to attack them as they had ever been. And what chance do you suppose the Israelites would now have to gain a victory over these nations, since they were divided into two kingdoms and no longer had one country for which they could all fight

together? The one thing that still did belong to all of them was, of course, the Temple at Jerusalem. But Jeroboam soon managed it so that the people of Israel, that is, the ten tribes, should not care even for the Temple.

You remember I told you that the people from all parts of Palestine used to come three times a year to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple. But Jeroboam was afraid that, if the people of Israel still kept on going to the Temple at Jerusalem, which was now the capital of the kingdom of Judah and where Rehoboam lived, they might some day unite again with the people of Judah. For this reason, Jeroboam built temples in cities that belonged to the kingdom of Israel so that his people would no longer have to go to Jerusalem for the three festivals of the year. He even changed the date of one of the festivals and told his people that they must never go to worship in the Temple at Jerusalem.

All this might not have been bad yet, for the two kingdoms still had the same religion and worshiped the true God. They might still have been friends, therefore, even if they were not united. But Jeroboam was so anxious that the people of Israel should have

nothing to do with the people of Judah that he even made his people worship idols. This meant, of course, that from now on the two kingdoms were permanently divided and could never be united again. And, as time went on and other kings came to rule over Israel in Jeroboam's place, their idol worship continued, and the two nations became enemies.

Now, the kingdom of Israel was the larger of the two but it became also the weaker of the two. In the first place, all the people of Israel were not as true to their kings as the people of Judah were to theirs. The kings of Israel changed very often and many times it happened that someone of the people killed the king and made himself king. And you can imagine that the people did not have much love for such things. Then, too, the people of Israel were not as fond of their capital, Samaria, as the people of Judah were of Jerusalem. But, what was worse than anything else, they left off obeying the laws of God and started more and more to worship idols, and their wicked ways made their nation weak.

Elijah and Ahab.

NOT all the people were satisfied, however, to have the worship of idols in the country. There were some who were not even afraid to tell those wicked kings about the awful wrong they were doing. Can you guess who those fearless people were? The prophets, of course. The first one of these prophets who tried to get those kings to give up idol worship was a man by the name of Elijah. The people were afraid of him, for he looked strange. He was a tall man with long hair and used to go around wrapt in a mantle of sheepskin. No one knew where he lived. Most of the time he used to be among the rocks and cliffs of the mountains where only ravens (crows) lived. People used to wonder how he could stand it there or how he got any food, unless the ravens brought him something to eat every day. But, even though his looks were strange his heart was warm and true. Whenever any wrong was done, he would suddenly come and talk to the people, and, as soon as he finished saying what he had to say, he would disappear as suddenly as he had come.



"The Prophet Elijah"

No one seemed to know where he had come from nor where he went to. The people were, therefore, afraid of this man, and the king, too, came to fear him.

The king who ruled over Israel in Elijah's time was named Ahab. He was even worse than Jeroboam had been. He married Jezebel, a Phoenician woman, who was a wicked person, and she was as cruel as she was wicked. She and Ahab had a temple built to the idol Baal which she had brought with her from Phoenicia, and there was more idol worship in Israel now than there had ever been before. Jezebel did not want the Israelites to worship God at all any more and threatened to kill the prophets who were teaching God's laws. Some of the people were, therefore, afraid to worship the true God, while others worshiped both the true God and Baal.

Now, Elijah made up his mind to try and stop the worship of Baal. The first thing he did was to come to Ahab and tell him how wicked it was to build a temple to an idol and to make the people worship in that temple. But Ahab became very angry and wanted to have Elijah put to death, so Elijah fled to the mountains. About three years later

when Elijah noticed that the worship of Baal was spreading, he again went to Ahab and told him that he must stop his own wickedness and his wife's cruelty. This was at a time when there was a famine in the land and there was great suffering. The people had been gathering every day to pray for rain. But, instead of praying just to God, they had been praying to God and Baal. This made Elijah very angry and so he made up his mind to speak to Ahab again and also to the people. When Ahab suddenly saw Elijah standing before him, he said: "Is it you, the man who has been troubling Israel?" "No," said the prophet, not at all afraid of the king, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your family have been troubling Israel by disobeying God's commandments and making the people worship that hideous idol, Baal."

It is strange, of course, that Ahab should have accused Elijah of troubling Israel when he knew that the prophet was a great friend of his people and was trying so hard to tell them the truth and to teach them the laws of God. But, you know, this is the mistake all of us often make. We do not like those who tell us the truth about ourselves and

when somebody tries to show us where we are doing wrong, we think he is our enemy.

However, the king was frightened when he heard Elijah speak so boldly and could not say a word. Elijah then told Ahab that he must call all the people of Israel together and let him talk to them. The king obeyed and, when the people were all standing on Mount Carmel, ready to hear what Elijah had to say to them, the prophet showed them how foolish it was to worship Baal and what a terrible wrong it was for people who knew God's Commandments (he reminded them of the second Commandment: Thou shalt not have any other gods besides me) to worship God and idols at the same time. "How long will you keep on having two beliefs," Elijah said to the people at last, "make up your minds whom you want to serve. If the God whom our fathers worshiped is the true God obey him, if Baal is God, obey Baal."

These words went right to the hearts of the people. They thought now of the wrong they had been doing and, as they saw the prophet standing before them, they thought also of the great leaders and teachers who had served God with all their hearts and

who had done so much for their country and their nation, and so they cried out: "The God of our fathers is the true God, we will obey him!"

Elijah's mission was now ended. He had gotten the people to give up the worship of Baal and to begin again worshiping God alone. The king, too, promised to worship God now. But Jezebel was furious and sent some of her servants to kill the prophet. Again Elijah fled. But he soon returned and, unexpectedly, he again stood before the king. The reason for the prophet's coming to the king this time was a wrong the king had committed not against God, but against one of the people. There was a vineyard next to the king's palace which the king wanted for a garden. He asked the owner of the vineyard, Naboth was his name, to sell him that vineyard, but Naboth told the king that he did not want to sell his vineyard because it had belonged to his father and his grandfather, and he did not like to part with it. When Jezebel heard about it, she had Naboth put to death and told Ahab to go and do what he pleased with the vineyard, since Naboth was no longer in the way. Now, you might think

that Ahab would have refused to have anything more to do with that vineyard after Jezebel had committed a crime in order to get it for him. But Ahab had so long been letting Jezebel have her way about everything that he at once started out to visit the vineyard and to give orders to make a garden of it. And it was then, just as he was about to enter the vineyard, that Elijah stopped him and told him that he was not fit to be the king of the Israelites and that any people who had a man like Ahab and a woman like Jezebel for king and queen ought to be pitied. He reminded Ahab that he had broken both the tenth and the sixth Commandments (you remember what these are, do you not?) and succeeded in making Ahab very much ashamed of himself. The king no longer wanted the vineyard and told Elijah that he was very sorry for what had happened. You see, he was beginning to see the sad mistake he had made in letting his cruel and wicked wife have her way all the time. But it was too late. Even if the prophet had been willing to forgive him, the people could no longer trust their king who made their lives and their property unsafe.

Elisha and Naaman.

FOR a number of years Elijah went on teaching the people the laws of God and watching over them and their king so that both might do no wrong. Then he died just as he had lived, without anyone's knowing where he died. Only to his pupil Elisha did he say good-bye, giving him his sheepskin mantle which the people had come to know so well, and then he suddenly disappeared.

After Elijah disappeared, Elisha took his place as the leading prophet among the Israelites. When he was only a young man Elijah had met him one day ploughing in the field and took a great liking to him. He showed his liking for the young man by throwing his own mantle around him, which meant that Elijah wanted him also to be a prophet. Elisha was delighted to know that Elijah thought so much of him that he wanted him to be a prophet and said that he would only wait long enough to say good-bye to his parents and then he would go with Elijah. From that day on Elisha had always been at Elijah's side, learning all he could from the

great prophet, and now that Elijah was no longer among his people, he, Elisha, became the leading prophet in Elijah's place. He could not do as much with his people as Elijah had been able to do. Yet he, too, succeeded in bringing the people back to the worship of God whenever they started to worship idols and often kept them back from doing things that are not right or just. One time, for instance, after a war with the Syrians, the king of Israel wanted to have all the Syrians who had been brought as prisoners put to death. This is what other nations used to do to prisoners of war in those days, and the Syrians would have done that to the Israelites if they had captured them. But Elisha would not have his people be so cruel, and so he went to the king and told him that he must not put those Syrians to death and that he must treat them kindly. The king obeyed, and the Syrian prisoners, instead of being killed, were given bread to eat and water to drink and then they were sent back to their own country.

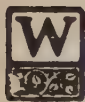
In this way Elisha went on teaching and leading the people and the kings of Israel (several kings, one after another ruled over

Israel during his time) and was very much loved by the people. In other countries, too, he soon became known as a very wise man and as a great teacher. So, one day the general of the Syrian army, whose name was Naaman and who had been suffering from a disease of the skin called leprosy, came to Elisha to find out what he could do to be cured of his sickness. Now, it often happens, as you know, that we become sick because we do not take care of ourselves properly and don't live as we should, and leprosy is a sickness which comes from not being clean. So, when Elisha heard what Naaman had come for, he sent word through his servant telling Naaman to wash in the Jordan and be clean. This made Naaman very angry, for he thought that the prophet was making light of his sickness. He thought washing and bathing too simple a thing for such a sickness. But his servants said to Naaman: "If the prophet had told you to do something hard, you would have done it; why don't you try bathing? Maybe that will really help you." And, to his great surprise, after the Syrian general had tried bathing in the Jordan for a number of days his disease really left him. This showed

Naaman that Elisha was a very wise man after all and he came to thank him and wanted to make him a present of much gold and silver, but Elisha would not accept anything from him, saying that he was only too glad to have been able to help him and that he would in no way take anything for it. The unselfish way in which the prophet acted surprised Naaman still more, and he said that he was sure that the religion of such a wise and kind man as Elisha must be a very good religion to have, and so he said that from that day on he would worship only the one true God.

The Israelites, too, began to understand more and more every day what a good and great man Elisha was. Those were hard times for the people of Israel. The neighboring nations often made war upon them, and there was much suffering in the land. But Elisha was always among them, going from place to place to help them wherever he could, cheering them up and encouraging them and telling them not to lose heart and to trust in God. The people, therefore, learned to love him and to look to him for help and cheer, and great was their sorrow when he died and there was no other great prophet to take his place.

Jonah.



WHEN I told you in my last story that there was no great prophet to take Elisha's place, I did not mean that there were no more great prophets or great and good men among the Israelites later on, nor that there were no prophets at all among the Israelites at the time of Elisha's death. The fact is, there were later a number of great prophets whose names I shall tell you by and by. And right after Elisha died there were also several prophets, but these did not have the patience and unselfish love for their own people and other people that Elisha had had. One of these prophets was named Jonah. During his time the city of Nineveh, the Syrian capital, had grown very large and very rich, but also very wicked. No one of the people seemed to care for honesty, truth, or justice, and nobody's life or property was safe.

Now, a city like that cannot exist very long, and Jonah, who knew the city of Nineveh well, was sure that it could not stand much longer, unless the people changed their ways. He felt very sorry for the thousands of people who lived there and wanted very

much to go and talk to them and see if they would not give up their wickedness. But he did not think that those people would listen to him.

For some time now Jonah could not make up his mind what to do. God's voice within him kept on saying to him to go and save those thousands of people, but he kept on thinking that his going to Nineveh would do no good and that those wicked people were too far gone ever to change their ways or to save themselves from destruction. This way of thinking was, of course, a great mistake, for, no matter how bad people are, if they only want to change their ways and do better they can. But I am afraid Jonah was trying to do what many of us do very often when we have some unpleasant work before us. We try to find an excuse for not doing it, even though we know that we should do it. And that is, I think, just what Jonah tried to do. He knew that he ought to do all he could to save the city. God's voice within him told him he should, but it was a very unpleasant thing to come to strange people and to tell them not to be so wicked or their city would be destroyed, and so he was looking for an excuse not to go.



JONAH PREACHING TO THE NINEVITES

When he had gone on thinking about this matter for some time and had begun to feel more sorry for the people at Nineveh, he at last made up his mind to escape that uneasy feeling and worry about those people by taking a long trip on the ocean. He, therefore, went to Joppa, which lay right by the sea, and boarded a ship that was ready to sail on a long voyage. This was again a great mistake. Jonah should have known that he could not escape the voice of God. God is everywhere, on the sea as well as on dry land, and we cannot escape the voice of God anywhere. And Jonah soon found out his mistake, for he could not help thinking about Nineveh all the time he was on the ocean. After a few days a severe storm arose, and Jonah was shipwrecked and carried by the waves to the shore. That he did not drown was wonderful. It seemed to him as though some large fish had swallowed him up and carried him to the shore where he was thrown upon the dry land. He felt sure that God had saved him from drowning so that he might go and try to save the people of Nineveh.

Without losing any time, Jonah now went right on to Nineveh and, to his surprise, he

found the people ready and willing to listen to him and, when he had shown them how bad and wicked they had been and told them that their city would be ruined if they did not change their ways, they felt very sorry and promised at once to give up their wicked ways. And, what is more, they kept their promise, and their city was saved. This showed Jonah what a mistake he had made when he thought that those people had been bad too long to change their ways and that he could do nothing to save them. From now on he never lost hope, therefore, and was always ready to help his own people, and other people as well, all he could.

Kingdom of Israel Destroyed.

ABOUT two hundred and fifty years had now passed since the people of Israel had separated from the people of Judah. During all this time they often had to go to war with some of the neighboring nations. This was nothing new, of course, for, you remember, during the time of David they had to do the same thing. But then

they were united with the other tribes while now they formed only a part of this nation. Then, too, they had given up their capital in Jerusalem and built new temples and no longer came together on the three festivals of the year as they had been in the habit of doing. Their love for their country was therefore, not as great as it had been when Jerusalem, the city of the great David, was their capital; their worship of God was not as true as it had been when the great temple of Solomon was their house of worship; and they were not as ready to work together and fight for one another as they had been when they used to meet three times a year to celebrate the great feasts together.

In this way it came about that the kingdom of Israel from the very time it was started was becoming weaker and weaker all the time. There were great prophets—Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea—to teach them God's laws, and there were some brave kings to rule over them and to protect them against their enemies. But, even with the prophets to teach them and those kings to lead them, they often worshiped idols and did not lead the same good lives which had at one time made them

so strong, nor did they have the same courage which had at one time made their enemies afraid of them.

What made it still worse was that, while the people of Israel had all the time been getting weaker, some other nations had all the time been getting stronger and more powerful. And one of these nations, the Assyrians, under their king Shalmaneser, now came and made war upon the kingdom of Israel. The king who ruled over Israel at that time was Hosea, the nineteenth and last king, a much better and braver man than many of the kings who had ruled over Israel before him. But he had no way of saving his country. The Assyrian army was very large, and Shalmaneser was a fierce fighter. The war was long and cruel. For three years the Assyrians kept on hammering away at Samaria, the capital of Israel. The people of Israel defended themselves bravely, but there was no use. They could not hold out against the mighty army of their enemy and, after three years of terrible fighting, the Assyrians conquered them, destroyed their country and carried them off as prisoners to Assyria.

Thus the kingdom of Israel fell, and the ten tribes who made up that kingdom were lost. It is sad to think that a kingdom which might have been very great and powerful should have come to such a sudden end. Had they remained united with the other tribes, they and the other tribes might always have been able to stay in their land as a great and strong nation. By separating from the rest of their people, however, the ten tribes made their nation weak and, after two hundred and fifty-three years, they not only lost their country, but they themselves were lost, and no one has ever known what became of them.

Kingdom of Judah Destroyed.

MEANWHILE, the kingdom of Judah was also becoming weaker. The people of Judah were small in number after the other tribes separated, and their enemies were forever attacking them. Yet, the people of Judah were better able to withstand the attacks of their enemies than the people of Israel had been. They had better kings than the



"The people were weak and cowardly and Isaiah was sad"

people of Israel had had. Two of their kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, were good and brave men and did a great deal for their country and their people. Then, too, they had many great prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micha—to cheer and encourage them and to tell them to trust in God and not to give up hope. Having Jerusalem, the city of David, for their capital and the Temple of Solomon for their house of worship, and remembering what David and Solomon had done for their nation, also helped them to be better and braver, and so they could hold out against their enemies better than the ten tribes could. Shortly after the kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Shalmaneser, the kingdom of Judah was also in great danger, for Sennacherib, the king who ruled over Assyria after Shalmaneser, came with a great army and attacked Jerusalem. Hezekiah was then the king in Judah and Isaiah the prophet. The people of Judah were very much frightened and thought that they, too, would lose their country, just as the people of Israel had lost theirs, but the prophet and the king went among the people and encouraged them, saying that they must not lose courage, for

God would surely help them and God did help them, for sickness suddenly broke out in Sennacherib's army, and the Assyrian king and soldiers fled.

For about one hundred and fifty years longer the Judeans (that means the people of Judah) were able to keep their country and have their own kings. But they, too, were getting weaker, while another nation the Babylonians (Chaldeans), were getting more and more powerful. The two great nations of that time, in fact, were the Babylonians and the Egyptians. Of these, the Egyptians pretended to be friends of the Judeans and to help them against the Babylonians, and the Judeans thought their country safe as long as the Egyptians were on their side. The prophet Jeremiah, who lived at that time, told his people not to trust the Egyptians, saying that the Egyptians were false, but the people did not take the prophet's advice and were even angry at him for saying it. They thought so much of the Egyptians that they started to imitate their ways and to worship their idols. And it was the idol worship against which Jeremiah particularly warned them. But the people did not listen to Jere-

miah and, the more he spoke against their wicked ways, the more angry did they become at him. They went so far as to put him in prison and threatened to kill him if he did not stop his scolding. Jeremiah was heart-broken, for he knew that the people were going to ruin their country by imitating the Egyptian ways and relying on Egyptian friendship. But there was nothing he could do to make the people listen to him or to make them see their mistake. And, when the people finally did see their mistake and were ready to listen to their prophet, it was too late.

It happened just as Jeremiah had said it would happen. The Babylonians, under their king Nebuchadnezzar—Zedekiah was then the king of Judah—came with an immense army and, on the tenth day of the Hebrew month Tebeth, he attacked Jerusalem. The Egyptians did not do anything for the people of Judah, and the Judeans found themselves helpless. They fought like lions, but they were powerless against the large and terrible army of Nebuchadnezzar. They prayed to God for help and asked Jeremiah what they should do (how often this happens that **we**

pray to God and ask our teachers' advice when we are in trouble, but forget to pray or to listen to our teachers when we are well off), but it was too late now. The end of Judah had come. The Babylonians kept up their attack for over two years, all the time hammering away at the strong walls of the beautiful capital. The people in the city did not have enough food nor water, yet they forgot their hunger and thirst and kept up the fight as long as they could. At last, on the seventeenth day of the Hebrew month Tammuz, the Babylonians succeeded in breaking through the wall. They now quickly rushed into the city, and there was fierce fighting in which thousands of the Judeans were killed and their houses destroyed, and, when this had lasted three weeks, on the ninth day of Ab, the Babylonians set fire to the Temple and burned it. Most of the people who were still left were then made prisoners (captives) and taken to Babylonia. Some of the people fled to other countries and only a few were allowed to remain in Jerusalem. Among those who were taken to Babylonia, or Babylon, which was the capital of Babylonia, was the prophet Ezekiel. Jeremiah stayed in

Jerusalem and later went to Egypt to teach the Judeans who had fled there the laws of God.

Thus the great kingdom of Judah, too, was destroyed and most of the people taken away from their country to a strange land. But the people of Judah were different from the people of Israel. You remember I told you that, after the kingdom of Israel had been destroyed, the Ten Tribes were lost. But the people of Judah were not lost. When they went to Babylon, they took with them their love for their country and their people and made up their minds always to remain true to God, no matter where they might be. And their prophets, Ezekiel in Babylonia and Jeremiah in Egypt, kept up the hope and courage of their people, telling them that, if they would only keep on worshiping the true God, they would some day be able to return to their own country. "Be good citizens of the land in which you live now," Jeremiah once wrote in a letter to his people in Babylonia, "obey the laws of the country, but also remain true to your God." And the same people, who at one time hated the prophet for telling them the truth and advising them rightly now loved him and listened to him.

The Fasts of Tebeth, Tammuz and Ab.

HE destruction of their kingdom was a terrible blow to the Judeans, or Jews, as our people came to be called by and by. Nine hundred years had passed between the time they left Egypt and the time they left Palestine. We might call their leaving Palestine a second Exodus. But, what a difference there was between their exodus from Egypt and their exodus from Palestine! How happy and hopeful they had been when they left Egypt, and how heartbroken they were now when they left Palestine. Their sorrow now was as great as their joy had been nine hundred years before. And they were just as anxious to remember those sad days—the day on which the attack upon their country was begun, the day on which the wall of their beloved capital was broken through, and especially the day on which their grand Temple was burnt—as they had been anxious always to remember the happy day on which they were freed from Egypt.

Now, you remember how they made sure that they and their children and children's

children would never forget the day of their exodus from Egypt. They celebrated a feast—the Passover—in memory of the Exodus. Just so did they keep those three sad days, not as feasts, of course, but as fasts. And from that time on, our people have always fasted on those three days, the tenth of Teth (Assarah Betebeth), the seventeenth of Tammuz (Shivah Asar Betamuz), and the ninth of Ab (Tishah B'ab).

Many of our people do not fast any longer on these days. But, whether we fast on them or not, we should certainly remember the dates, for it is as necessary for us to know the days of sorrow and sadness in the history of our people as it is to know the days of joy and gladness. The one kind of days remind us of what our people gained, the other kind of what they lost.

But, I am sure you want to know what happened to the Judeans after they reached Babylonia, and so I will tell you.

They were not treated badly by Nebuchadnezzar once they reached Babylonia. They were allowed to have land and houses of their own and to do business. In fact, they were given a great deal of freedom, and many of



SHADRACH MESHACH AND ABED NEGO IN THE FIERY FURNACE

them became rich in a very short time. Yet they were very unhappy. They could not help thinking all the time of the country they had lost. They seemed to love Palestine and Jerusalem more now than they had ever loved these places before. They should have liked to be poor and live in Jerusalem rather than to be rich and live in Babylon. It seemed to them that they could never be glad or happy again. Their songs, which at one time were full of joy, now seemed sad to them; the prayers they offered hardly seemed the same as those which they used to say in Jerusalem; and the festivals they celebrated brought to them only the memory of the great country they had lost and of the happy times they used to spend when all the people gathered in Jerusalem. The only hope they had now was to be able to return some day and to live once more as a nation in their beloved country.

Their religion, too, they now loved more than they had ever loved it before, and they remained true to God. They quickly learned the language of the Babylonians (Aramaic) which was something like their own language (Hebrew) and made themselves very useful

to the king and the country. But one thing they would not do, and that is, give up their worship of the one true God. The Babylonians did not like that in the Judeans, of course, just as some people do not like us now because we keep on worshipping the one true God and do not take up their religion, and so the Babylonians tried in every possible way to make the Judeans bow down to idols. But, as I shall tell in my next story, the Judeans were willing to be put to death rather than to worship idols.

The Three Youths.

NOT only the older people who came to Babylonia and remembered their old home so well loved their old country and their religion so much, but even those who were only children when the kingdom of Judah was destroyed could not be made to give up the worship of the one true God. This you will see from the story I am going to tell you about three young men.

Among those who had been taken away from Jerusalem and brought to Babylon were

three boys whose names were Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. They were related to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, and their parents had been killed when Jerusalem was destroyed. They were very bright boys and, when Nebuchadnezzar saw them, he took such a liking to them that he had them brought to his palace and had them educated. They worked hard and were soon at the head of their classes in all their studies. This pleased the king very much and, as soon as they were graduated from school, he made them officers. Their future now seemed very bright, for they were as successful in their work at the court as they had been in their studies at school. But the king's love soon turned to hatred. He had put up a new idol of gold and had commanded that everyone in the capital should worship that new idol. Now, the Babylonians who were worshiping idols anyhow, obeyed the king's command. To them it did not make any difference whether they worshiped the new idol or not. But the three Jewish officers, who had been worshiping the one true God, could not, of course, worship the idol, and so they did not obey the king's command. This made Nebuchadnezzar

zar very angry, and he became as cruel to them now as he had been kind to them before. He did not seem to mind so much that the older people who had come from Palestine remained true to their religion. But it made him very angry to think that these young men, who had been brought up in his own house and educated in the Babylonian schools and who were now officers of the kingdom, should still love the religion of their fathers better than the religion of their king. He, therefore, tried in every possible way to make them obey his command. He first took their positions away from them and then had them beaten and tortured, but they would not worship the idol. At last he had them thrown into a furnace, and they came near being burnt, yet they said that they would rather die than worship idols. You see, they had been very young when they were taken away from their old home. But they had been old enough then already to know the difference between the worship of the true God and the worship of idols. They had already been old enough to understand the difference between the laws of their own people, that is, the laws of God which taught justice and kindness,

and the laws of other people, those who worshiped idols, which taught wickedness and cruelty. And so they made up their minds always to be true to God and to keep God's laws, even if it cost them their lives.

I am sure you are glad to know about those brave and true young men. We cannot help admiring such people. Even Nebuchadnezzar had to admire them at last. Angry as he was, he could not help thinking that a religion which even children learn to love so much that nothing in the world can make them give it up must be a good religion to have. He could not help feeling also what fine young men these were, and how brave and true they were, to be willing to suffer death rather than to do what they knew to be wrong. And the longer he thought about it, the more did he begin to like them again, and, at last, his anger disappeared and he was really glad that they had disobeyed his command and given him a chance to find out how true and brave they could be and how much they could be trusted. He then sent for them and gave them back their positions and honored them even more than he had honored them before.



DANIEL INTERPRETING THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Daniel.

ANOTHER young man who had been brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar became known all over the country, not only for his bravery, but also for his wisdom. His name was Daniel. He showed his wisdom when Nebuchadnezzar was still king, but he became especially famous after Nebuchadnezzar's death, when another king, Belshazzar, ruled over the Babylonians. This king, Belshazzar, was not as good a man as Nebuchadnezzar had been and did not treat the Jews as kindly as Nebuchadnezzar had treated them. Still, there came a time when he needed Daniel's services. It seems that he once found some words written on the wall of his palace which no one could explain. These words, "the handwriting on the wall," as they have been called, which had probably been put there by a prophet, and which no one could explain, were: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Ufarsin." It worried the king very much that he could not find out what they meant, and he offered a present to anyone who could explain them. But no one could. He, therefore, sent for Daniel and

told him that he would give him a present if he could explain those four words. Daniel said that he would explain the writing on the wall without a present. "These words mean," he then explained, "your days are numbered; your reign is finished; you have been weighed in the balance (scale) and found wanting (not having the full weight); your kingdom shall be taken from you by the Persians."

Daniel's explanation made the king feel uneasy, but before he had a chance to do anything about it, the Persians, who had become a very powerful nation, and who had conquered many other nations, suddenly attacked Babylon and conquered it. Belshazzar himself was killed in the attack and Cyrus, the king of Persia, became king also of Babylonia. The Jews were glad to have Cyrus for their king, as he was known to be a just and kind man. But Cyrus had to return to Persia, and so he made Darius, one of his generals, governor of Babylonia.

Daniel became famous now all over the country. He was not only a wise man, but also a very fearless man. He had explained the handwriting correctly, there could be no

mistake about that any more. But he had done something else. He had been fearless enough to tell the mighty Belshazzar that his acts were not those of a good and true king, for that is what he meant by saying: "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting." And no one liked and admired Daniel for being wise and fearless more than the new governor, Darius, did. He felt sure that a man like Daniel could help him a great deal in his work, and so he made him the chief officer in the kingdom.

This was, of course, a great honor, not only for Daniel, but also for the rest of the Jews. But in a way it was bad, for it made the other officers of the kingdom envious, and they tried to find fault with him. They could not, of course, find fault with his work, for a better and more honest man than Daniel never lived. But they found fault with him because of his religion. They reminded Darius that there was a law which forbade anyone to worship in any other way except the way the Persians worshiped and said that Daniel must be punished because he prayed to the one true God. Darius did not like to see Daniel treated badly, but he could not help

letting the officers carry out the law. He asked Daniel to leave off praying to God, but Daniel said that he did not care what those envious people did to him and that he would continue to pray to the one true God three times a day. The other officers now teased and tortured Daniel all day long and, at one time, threw him into a deep and dark pit which was known as "the lions' den," but all that did not trouble Daniel, and he came forth unhurt. This again showed Darius what a brave and fearless man Daniel was, and so he made up his mind to put a stop to the meanness and badness of the other officers. He, therefore, drove these envious officers out of his court, and Daniel remained the chief officer of the kingdom.

The Return from Babylonia.

FIFTY years had now passed since the Jews were taken away from their home. Those who had then been young men and women were now old people. Most of the Jews who now lived in Babylonia were born there and had never seen Palestine.

Yet, the love of all the people for Palestine and Jerusalem was strong, and they never gave up hope of returning some day. Their prophets, you remember, had always told them that some day they would be able to return, and so they waited anxiously for the time when they could have their old home again. They did not know, of course, how it would be possible for them to gain back their old land, for they could not very well fight for it. But they hoped that God would in some way help them to get back the country they loved. Of one thing they were sure, and that is, that they would be able to go on living in Palestine the same way as they had lived before it was destroyed, for they had never changed their habits and their worship of God. In fact, they were really the same nation that they had been a hundred years before, even though they did not now have a country of their own. And the time when they could again have a country of their own was nearer than they imagined.

You remember I told you that the Jews were glad when Cyrus conquered Babylonia, as they knew that he was a just and kind man. And he did not disappoint them. He knew

that they always hoped and prayed for their old home. He felt sorry for them and wanted to help them. Besides, they had been such good citizens while they stayed in Babylonia that he felt sure he could count on them if he ever wanted their help, no matter where they lived. He, therefore, made up his mind to let them return to their old home and, before the year in which he conquered Babylonia was over, he told them that they could go back to Palestine and that he would even give them back all the things that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of Solomon, so that they could build another house of worship like the first.

Imagine the joy of the people when they were told that they could go back to their beloved country. It meant a long and hard journey of six hundred miles. But nothing seemed hard for those happy people whose only hope was to see once more the "hills of Zion." It took them about a year to prepare for their journey and then, they could hardly wait that long, fifty thousand people started out for Palestine. Zerubabel, a grandson of their former king, and Joshua, a priest, were to lead them, and a thousand Persian soldiers

were to go with them to see that no harm came to them on their way.

It must have been a great sight to see those people, full of joy and happiness, singing and playing on their harps, starting out for their old home. And how happy they were four months later to enter Palestine again. The country was in a very bad condition, it is true, but what did that matter. Hard work would soon make of it again "a land flowing with milk and honey." And those people were certainly willing to work hard. Moreover, they had two great prophets to lead and to encourage them in their work, one was named Haggai, a very old man who still remembered the old temple, and the other, a younger man named Zechariah. And what do you think the first thing they did after they reached Palestine was? Thank God, of course, that they were in their old country again, and, as they reached Palestine in the fall, just about the time of the Succoth feast, they all gathered in Jerusalem and celebrated the great feast together. All they could do just then was to put up a tent for their house of worship, but, as soon as the festival was over, they started to make preparations for building a new

temple, and, with their prophets to encourage them in their work, it did not take long before the foundation was laid. The people now felt that they would soon have a new and beautiful house of worship and then they would be able to rebuild also the city and settle down to live as they had lived before their kingdom was destroyed. But all that was not to be yet. The work of building the Temple did not go on as fast as they thought it would. In the first place, they did not have now a rich and great king like Solomon to build that temple for them. They had to do everything themselves and had to divide their time between earning a living (by farming) and building the House of God. But, what put them back in their work more than anything else was the attack of a neighboring people, the Samaritans, who had made up their minds not to let the Jews build the new Temple.

The Samaritans.

WHEN I told you in my last story that the Samaritans made up their minds not to let the Jews build the Temple, you probably wondered who those people were and why they did not want the Jews to have a temple, so I am going to tell you something about them. The name "Samaritans" tells you, of course, that they lived in the city of Samaria, which, you remember, used to be the capital of the kingdom of Israel. Now when Shalmaneser conquered the city of Samaria and took the people of Israel away to Assyria, just a few—the very poorest, whom the Assyrian king did not care to take with him—remained, while many Assyrians came now that the city belonged to Assyria and settled in Samaria. In this way there came to be two kinds of people in Samaria, the few Jews who had remained in the city, and the Assyrians who had come there. These people of the two different nations lived together and, in time, they learned many things from one another so that the Israelites came to have some of the habits and the ways of worship of the Assyrians, and the Assyrians came to

have some of the habits and the ways of worship of the Israelites. They were, therefore, neither true Jews nor real Assyrians in their habits and in the way they worshiped, but were a mixture of both.

You understand now what sort of people those who now lived in Samaria, the Samaritans, were, do you not? Now, let me explain to you why they did not want the Jews to build the Temple. When those fifty thousand Jews, under Zerubabel and Joshua the Priest, came to Palestine and began to make their preparations for the building of the Temple, the Samaritans wanted to join them and build it with them, saying, that they, the Samaritans, also wanted to worship in the new Temple. The Jews did not like to refuse them, but they could not let people who were half Israelites and half Assyrians, who worshiped the true God and at the same time worshiped also idols, join them in the building of the Temple and in their worship, as this would have opened the way for idolatry in the very city where God's temple was. The Samaritans, however, could not understand why they were treated in that way, and so they became enemies of the Jews and tried to keep them from building the Temple.

At first they simply attacked the Jews from time to time and tried to keep them away from their work. But, when they found that the Jews went on with their work anyhow, they sent a letter to Darius (Cyrus had died in the meantime and Darius was now king of Persia), telling him that the Jews were trying to build up the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in order to become a stronger nation and to make war upon Persia. The Persian king then sent orders to Jerusalem telling the Jews that they must not put up buildings of any kind, and so their work on the Temple had to stop. But, after a while, Darius found out that the Samaritans had not told the truth and that Cyrus had given the Jews permission to build their Temple, so he wrote and told the Jews to go on building the Temple, and even offered them some help if they needed any.

The Jews were very glad that they could again go on with their work, and the building started to go up very fast. In four years the Temple, not as large nor as richly decorated as the first Temple had been, but built in the same style as the first Temple, was all finished, and the Jews were happy, indeed, to have a

house of worship again where those who lived in Jerusalem could come every day to pray, and where all of them could come together three times a year to celebrate the festivals.

The Story of Purim.

Esther.

HE Jews were now back in their own country. They had again their old home and a new Temple. Once more the joyous songs of the Levites could be heard every day, and once more the priests officiated at the services. But not all the Jews had returned. Ever so many remained in the different countries that now belonged to Persia. And, for some time, they were quite happy. Suddenly, however, some things happened which endangered the lives of all the Jews in the Persian kingdom, and it was only through the efforts of a beautiful woman, named Esther, that they were saved. And the way this beautiful woman, who was as good and brave as she was beautiful, and who loved her people and her religion so

much that she was willing to risk her own life for them, succeeded in saving them is so interesting that I want to tell you all about it.

When Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was king of Persia, he once gave a great feast to his princes and his people. The feast lasted several weeks. One day during that feast—the king and his princes had been drinking much wine that day—Ahasuerus commanded Vashti, his queen, to appear at the banquet so that he might show the princes how beautiful she was. But Vashti refused to come before those drunken lords. This made Ahasuerus and the princes very angry, and Vashti was divorced and driven out of the palace. The king then wanted to choose another queen in the place of Vashti. No sooner had this become known than many Persian mothers brought their daughters to the court to introduce them to the king. But they were all disappointed, for, somehow, the king did not like any of them. Shortly after that one of the king's officers happened to see a young and beautiful girl whom he thought the king would like. This girl was Esther, a Jewish orphan child



THE TRIUMPH OF MORDECAI

who was brought up by a cousin of hers, Mordecai. When the officer told Esther that she would have to go to the court with him to see the king, she was frightened. For, how could she think of becoming the queen of Persia when she was only a poor girl and had no one in the world but her cousin to help her? Then, too, she was very much attached to her cousin and loved her people and her religion, and so she thought that it would be wrong for her to marry a Persian, even though that Persian was a king. But she had to go with the officer and, when she was brought before Ahasuerus, he liked her so much that he at once chose her for his queen. Someone else in her place would, of course, have been very, very happy. But Esther was not. She would much rather have stayed in Mordecai's house and married a poor Jewish boy than to stay in the palace and be married to the Persian king. Little did she dream that she would some day be able to save her people from death and destruction.

Mordecai.

Mordecai, too, felt very lonesome after Esther had been taken away, and so he used to come every day and stay at the gate of the king's palace in order to find out how Esther was getting along. One day he heard two servants plotting to poison Ahasuerus. They spoke in a strange language and did not think anyone else could understand them. But Mordecai was a very learned man and could speak many languages, and so he knew what they were saying to each other. At once he sent a message to Esther and told her about this plot to kill the king. Esther told the king about it, and, when it was found that the information was correct, the servants were punished, and it was written down in the record books of the kingdom that Mordecai had saved the king's life.

Haman.

Meanwhile one of the officers had become the king's favorite and was made prime minister. This officer, whose name was Haman, was a very conceited man, and so

he got the king to order that everybody in the kingdom should kneel down when the prime minister passed. The Persians did not mind kneeling down before Haman, as they were accustomed to kneel down before their idols. But Mordecai, being a Jew and worshiping only the one true God, would not kneel before anybody or anything, and so he refused to kneel down to Haman. This made Haman very angry and, being a wicked man and an enemy of the Jews, he made up his mind to take revenge, not only on Mordecai, but on all the Jews who lived in the Persian kingdom. He, therefore, went to the king and told him that the Jews were a bad people and that they were not obeying the laws of the country. The king believed Haman and asked him how he wanted the Jews punished. Haman said that they must all be put to death. Now, Ahasuerus, I am afraid was not much better than Haman and being a stupid man, he did not even take the trouble of finding out whether Haman's accusation of the Jews was true or not, but told his prime minister that he could do with them what he pleased.

Haman felt overjoyed to think that he would now get rid of all the Jews in the country. All that remained now for him to do was to set a date on which the Jews were to be killed, and then there would be no more Jews in the land. He, therefore, cast lots to find out what date to set for it, and the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the Hebrew month Adar. Immediately Haman sent out orders, which were signed by the king, that on the thirteenth day of Adar all the Jews who lived in Persia should be put to death. When Mordecai heard what had happened, he quickly sent a message to Esther telling her that she must go to the king at once and ask him to recall the cruel orders of Haman. But this was not an easy thing to do, for there was a law in Persia that anyone who came to the throne of the king uncalled should be put to death. However, Esther made up her mind to go to the king, even at the risk of her life. For three days she then fasted and prayed—and you may be sure, all the other Jews also fasted and prayed all that time—that God should help her, so that she might succeed in saving her people. She then

went before the king and, when Ahasuerus saw her, he immediately held out his golden sceptre to her to show that he wanted to talk to her. He was not a little frightened, though to see his beloved queen risking her life in that way and thought that she must have something very important to tell him, and so he said: "Tell me what it is that brings you here; whatever you wish shall be granted, even if it costs me half of my kingdom." But Esther did not tell him yet what she really came for. She simply said that she had prepared a fine banquet and wanted him and Haman to attend it. The king said that he would be glad to come and that he would have Haman come also.

At the banquet the king again asked Esther if there was anything she wished for. But Esther did not think this was the right time for saying anything about her people, and so she merely asked that the king and Haman should come to another banquet that she would prepare for them the following evening. Now, all this time neither Haman nor Ahasuerus knew that Esther was a Jewess, for she had not told



"The beautiful Queen Esther and her maidens"

anybody who she was. Haman, therefore, thought that the queen had taken a great liking to him and, when he returned home from the banquet, he told his wife, Zeresh, that he felt sure the queen thought a great deal of him, since he was the only one besides the king whom she had invited to the two banquets. "If I could only get rid of that man Mordecai," he said. Zeresh—she was a fit companion for her wicked husband—advised him to build a high gallows and to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai on it.

While Mordecai's name was thus being discussed in Haman's house, it came to be mentioned also in the king's palace. But for a different reason. After the king returned from the banquet he went to bed and could not fall asleep. So, to pass the time, he asked for his record books which he wanted to read until he became sleepy. In reading of the different things that had happened to him, his eye fell upon the place where it was recorded that Mordecai had once saved his life. As he read this, Ahasuerus wondered whether anything had ever been done to show Mordecai how much

the King appreciated what Mordecai had done for him. The following morning, as soon as Ahasuerus came into the court room, he asked whether any honors had ever been shown Mordecai for saving the king's life and was told that nothing of the sort had been done. Just then Haman entered the room. He had given orders to erect a high gallows and came now to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai on it. "What should be done for one whom the King wants to honor?" Ahasuerus asked Haman. Haman felt sure that it was he himself whom the king wanted to honor, and so he said: "A man whom the king wants to honor should be dressed in the king's clothes and have the king's crown put upon his head, and he should ride through the city upon the king's horse, and one of the king's officers should lead the horse and call out: 'This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor.' "

You can imagine how Haman felt when Ahasuerus told him that it was Mordecai to whom this honor was to be shown and that he, Haman, should at once get everything ready and lead the horse for Mordecai.

But Haman's troubles were only beginning. No sooner had he finished leading Mordecai, whom he was going to hang that day, through the streets of the city, than it was time for him to go to the queen's banquet, and you may be sure that he did not enjoy this banquet as much as he had enjoyed the one of the night before. The king, on the other hand, seemed to enjoy it even more; and so he again asked Esther if there was anything he could do to show how much he loved her. Esther felt that the time had now come for her to speak, for she had really been waiting for this chance, and so she said: "How can you speak to me about love when you ought to know that I and all my people are to be killed?" The king was astonished to hear that. "Who could be such a criminal as to try to kill you and your people?" the king asked. "Why, this cruel and wicked man Haman," Esther said. On hearing this, the king could hardly speak for anger, and Haman, frightened and hardly knowing what to do or say, rushed up to Esther, intending to throw himself upon his knees and to ask her to forgive him. This made matters



EZRA READING THE LAW IN THE HEARING OF THE PEOPLE

even worse for Haman for the king mistook his action and thought that he wanted to hurt Esther, and so the King's soldiers were at once called and Haman was arrested. As Haman was being led out of the room, one of the servants happened to say something about the gallows that Haman had built and Ahasuerus gave orders to hang Haman upon that gallows.

The following day Mordecai was put into Haman's place, and messengers were sent out to all parts of the country to recall those orders about killing the Jews. When the thirteenth of Adar came, some fighting took place between the Jews and their enemies, but the king's officers and soldiers had received orders to protect the Jews, and so their enemies were defeated.

On the following day the Jews all over Persia celebrated a great feast, and Mordecai and Esther made a law that the Jews should always celebrate the fourteenth of Adar as the feast of Purim (the word "Purim" means "lots" and refers to the lots which Haman had cast in trying to set the date for killing the Jews), and that on that day they should exchange presents (Shlach

Menoth) and send gifts to the poor. And our people always have celebrated and always will celebrate Purim just as Mordecai and Esther wanted them to do, for it is certainly a good thing to remember what a good and brave woman Esther was and how, with God's help, she saved her people from death and destruction.

Ezra.

N the meantime things in Palestine had not gone on as they should. The Jews there had a hard time of it. Their country was not in a very prosperous condition. They were beginning to lose hope, and many of them married women of other nations and started to disobey the laws of God. The Sabbath and the festivals, too, were not kept by the people as they should have been kept and, for a while, it seemed as though the Jews were going to forget everything about their religion and the laws of God.

When the Jews of Babylonia heard of all this, they made up their minds to do some-

thing for their people in Palestine. They felt that the people of Palestine needed some new encouragement and that some of their own number ought to travel to Palestine and bring the people there back to their laws and their religion. And among those that felt that way no one was more anxious to help the people in Palestine than was Ezra, a very wise and learned man who had been a teacher in Babylonia and who was famous all over the world as a "scribe," which means a writer. He, therefore, asked permission of Artaxerxes, who was now king of Persia, to take some of the Jews with him and leave for Palestine. The king, who was very friendly to the Jews, gave his permission, and so Ezra with about six thousand other Jews started out for Palestine.

When Ezra and his people reached Palestine they were almost heart-broken to see what had happened there. In eighty years, for that is as long as it was since Zerubabel had led the fifty thousand Jews back to Palestine, the laws of God came to be almost forgotten. Ezra felt so sad that he cried, and he prayed to God for help that he might be able to teach the people the laws which they

had forgotten. He then called all the Jews together and reminded them of their wickedness. His words went right to the hearts of the people, and they promised to leave off marrying women of the nations who worshiped idols and to keep God's laws. But Ezra noticed that they hardly remembered God's laws any more and he was sure that, unless they knew the laws, even if they really wanted to worship God as they should, they could not. He, therefore, wrote down the laws of Moses for them and studied these laws with them. He also wrote out prayers for them (some of the prayers we have now in our prayer books are those which Ezra wrote) and made a rule that they should read from the laws of Moses three times a week at their services, not only in Jerusalem, but in every other city of Palestine.

In this way Ezra was able to do a great deal for his people and to make their religion safe. But, while their religion was now safe, their city was not. The walls of the city were not yet rebuilt, and their enemies, especially the Samaritans, were all the time attacking them. Something had to be done, or they might again lose their country. They

needed a strong and brave leader to help them against their enemies. But, where were they to find such a leader? Ezra could lead them in the way of worship; he could teach them the law and write prayers for them and make good Jews of them. But he was a teacher and not a soldier. He was wise and brave enough a man, but he was not the man to gather an army and fight off the enemies. And, if a man like Ezra could not help them, there seemed to be no one else who could. They certainly were badly off. They had sent messengers to their people in Babylonia and Persia, to tell them how much they were suffering and how much they needed a great leader to help them. Would those messengers succeed? Would they be able to find another such man as Ezra who loved his people and his home country so much that he would be willing to come to them and take up the hard and dangerous work of defending them against their enemies? It seemed almost too much to expect that the messengers would be successful. Yet, as we shall see, they were successful.



NEHEMIAH VIEWING SECRETLY THE RUINS OF THE WALLS
OF JERUSALEM

Nehemiah.

WHEN the messengers came to Susa, the capital of Persia, they went to Nehemiah, who was the king's butler (the position of butler to the king was a very high office in those days), and told him how badly off their people in Palestine were. Now, Nehemiah was just the sort of man the Jews of Palestine needed. He was a brave and wise man and, being an officer of the great Persian kingdom, he knew exactly what to do in order to free his people from their enemies. But, just because he was such a great and good man, it could hardly be expected that he would go to Palestine. He was the king's favorite and made such a good officer that his services were very much needed in Persia. It was not likely, therefore, even if he wanted to give up his position and leave his home, that the king would let him go.

But Nehemiah was as true to his people and his religion as he was to his king and his office. He was as good a Jew as he was a great man. He loved his people even more than he loved his position. When the messengers

told him how much the Jews of Palestine were suffering, his mind was made up. He must bring them help. Whether the king would like it or not, he must go to Palestine at once. The news that the messengers brought him made him feel so sad—and he looked as sad as he felt—that he could not eat that day and thought of nothing else but of his suffering people over in Palestine and Jerusalem.

When the king noticed how sad Nehemiah looked he asked what the trouble was. Nehemiah then told him the news he had received from his people in Palestine and asked the king to let him go and help them. The king felt sorry to lose his favorite officer, yet, seeing how much Nehemiah wanted to go, he gave him permission to do so. The only thing he asked of him was that he should return as soon as the walls of Jerusalem were built and the country put in good condition. This Nehemiah promised to do and, after praying to God for help, he started out for Jerusalem.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, the people were surprised and delighted to see him, for they felt sure that he was just the man to help them. And they were not dis-

appointed. The country was in a worse condition than Nehemiah had imagined. Except for the Temple, the city of Jerusalem looked almost as bad as it did right after the kingdom was destroyed. The enemy was close by. The people seemed to have lost courage and had almost given up hope. But Nehemiah felt sure that he could raise the courage of the people and build up the ruined city. He at once called the Jews together and had them start clearing away the ruins so that the building of the walls could begin. The Samaritans did not, of course, like to see the new life that was brought into the city and tried to keep the Jews from their work, but Nehemiah was not the man to permit the work to be stopped. He armed the people so that they could be soldiers and workmen at the same time, and at night he had watchmen standing all around the city to see that the enemy did not steal in and attack his men.

You can imagine how hard it must have been for the people to keep on fighting and building the walls at the same time (no other city in the world was ever built that way), yet, with Nehemiah to lead them, their work went fast and, in fifty-two days, the walls



JOB HEARING OF HIS RUIN

were finished. The people were very happy to know that their city was safe now and that they could start building their own houses and could go about their work without being afraid of their enemies.

But Nehemiah's hard work was not yet over. In the first place, he had to see to it that Jerusalem again became full of life and prosperity. Then the other cities of Palestine also had to be built up. And, when all that was done he made up his mind to help Ezra in the way of teaching his people the laws of God and to make them know and love their religion so much that they would never again give it up or be untrue to it. From now on he and Ezra, therefore, worked together—there was also a prophet whose name is not known, but who was called Malachi and who helped Ezra and Nehemiah—and, after a few years, there was not another country where the people were as happy or as good and kind to one another as were the Jews of Palestine.

Job.

BEFORE I go on telling you a little more about the Jews of Palestine and about their country, I want to tell you a sad but beautiful story about a man who lived in a country called Uz. His name was Job, and I want you to know something about him because he was so different from other people. He was not a brave soldier, nor a great leader of his people. But he was the most patient man that ever lived. He was a very rich and happy man. He had many herds of cattle and large flocks of sheep. His children, too (he had seven sons and three daughters), were rich and happy. When one of them had a birthday, they all used to come and celebrate it together, for they loved one another very much. You can imagine how delighted Job was to see his children getting along together so nicely. Other people, too, were glad to see what a fine and happy family Job had, for Job was such a good man that everybody loved him.

But Job's happiness did not last all the time. Trouble and sorrow came upon him and destroyed his happiness. All of a sudden

everything started to go wrong with him. His cattle were taken away by robbers, his sheep were killed by lightning and one day when his children had come together to celebrate the birthday of his eldest son, a terrible storm threw down the house and killed them all. When Job heard all this, he was heart-broken, yet he was as patient as ever and said: "God gave me these, and God has taken them away, I must be as true to God as ever." And, as if this were not enough trouble, he himself soon became very sick, his face and body being covered with boils which made him suffer terrible pains. People now wondered whether he would still be as good and kind and patient as he ever was. But there was no change in him. His own wife could not understand how he stood it all without complaining. "Do you still believe that God is kind and loves you," she asked, "don't you think that you would be better off dead than to suffer so much?" Job was surprised and sorry to hear his wife talk that way. It made him feel worse than all the pain he had suffered. "How can you talk so foolishly," he said, "would it be right to take all the good things

that God gives us and not the bad things also?" Three men, who had been his friends, then came to see him, but, instead of talking pleasantly to him so that he might forget his pain and his suffering, they scolded him and kept on talking to him about his troubles and telling him what they would do and how they would act if they had been in his place. Yet, Job kept up his patience and trust in God until his sickness passed, and, by working as patiently as he had suffered, he became rich again, and everybody loved him more than ever for his patience and his goodness.

Can you see now why I wanted you to know something about this man? It is certainly a good thing to know that there was once a man who could be so brave and patient in all his troubles and suffering. It helps us to be brave and patient when we are in trouble. In fact, people never forget how Job acted, and even now, when we speak of someone as being very patient, we say: "This man, or this woman, has the patience of Job."

The Maccabees.

 HERE were many other great and good men and women among our people in the different countries where they lived. But I cannot stop to say anything about them, as I promised to tell you more about the Jews of Palestine and what happened to them and to their country.

We left off, you remember, with Ezra and Nehemiah, when the Jews had settled down to live again as a happy nation in their old home. For a long time all went well with them now. The Persian kings were friendly to them, and so, as long as Persia was the most powerful nation, no one troubled the Jews, and they enjoyed peace. By and by, however, other nations became more powerful, and Persia was conquered. At first this change did not make any difference to the Jews, and they went on enjoying peace and freedom as before. But, when Syria had grown strong, and a fierce and cruel king, Antiochus Epiphanes (he was often called the "madman"), came to rule over Syria, trouble started for the Jews. Being an idol worshiper, he did not like to see the Jews worship the true God

and tried to make them give up their religion. He, therefore, came with an army and captured Jerusalem. He then put an idol into the Temple and commanded the Jews to kneel down to it. Any one who worshiped the true God or kept the Sabbath or the festivals, or read the law, which, as you know, since the time of Ezra the Jews had been in the habit of reading, was to be put to death.

A terrible time now started for the Jews. Some of them were afraid of being put to death and obeyed the cruel king. But many died rather than to give up their religion. An old man named Eliezer, who was eighty years old, the Syrians tortured horribly to make him obey the king, but he remained true to his religion and his God and, when he was taken to be killed, he called out "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord Is One!"

By the way, we must learn these words. Moses had taught the Israelites to say them, and our people have always remembered them, and many of them who, like this old man, were killed for refusing to give up their religion, recited these words. Here is the Hebrew for that verse: "Shma Yisroel, Adonoy Elohenu, Adonoy Echod."

Many of the Jewish women were as brave as the men. One woman named Hannah acted even more bravely than Eliezer had done. She had seven sons, and the king wanted them to worship the idol he had put up. At first he promised them all sorts of things if they obeyed and, when he found that he could not win them over by promises, he threatened to kill them if they disobeyed. But their mother told them not to be deceived by the king's promises and not to be afraid of his threats. And she hardly had to tell her sons all that, for they were as true to the religion as she herself was. It makes one sad to think that anyone could be so cruel as to kill people for being true to their religion, but Antiochus was cruel enough to do it, and so all the sons, one after the other, were killed and then Hannah herself was put to death.

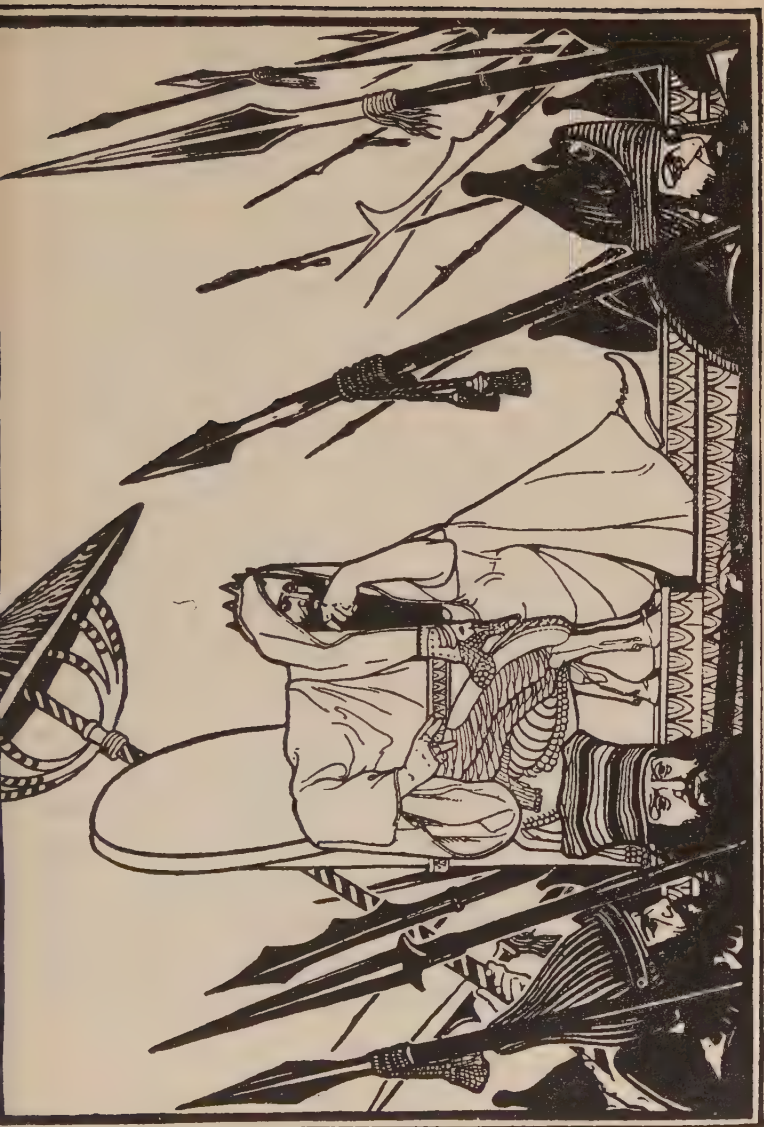
The story about the bravest people at that time I have not yet told you, however. The mad king was not satisfied to have captured Jerusalem and to have killed many of the Jews there, but he wanted to force all the Jews of Palestine to worship idols. He, therefore, sent one of his officers and an army

of soldiers to make all the Jews worship idols. The army went from town to town, put up idols and told the Jews that they must worship those idols or they would be put to death. Again, many were afraid and obeyed, while others suffered death rather than to worship idols. For a while it seemed now as though the wicked Syrians would be successful—not in making all the Jews worship idols, but in killing those who remained true to their religion. But, when the Syrians came to a town called Modin, they found out that there were still people among the Jews who were willing, not only to die for their religion, but, what seemed much harder at that time, to fight for it. There was a family of priests in that town, named the Hasmoneans. These priests, Mattathiah and his five sons—Johanan, Simon, Judah, Jonathan and Eliezer—were very much respected in that town, and so they were sent for and promised all sorts of presents if they would kneel down to the Syrian idol. But Mattathiah, a grand and noble old man, said: If all the nations of the earth should bow down to the king's idols, my sons and I will remain true to the one God." These words made the Syrian officer

very angry, but, before he knew what was happening, Mattathiah threw down the idol and, when the officer wanted to take hold of him, the old man dealt him such a severe blow that he fell to the ground—dead.

This was certainly a brave act, and many of the Jews felt their courage and their hope coming back to them when they saw what the old priest had done. But the Hasmoneans knew that they could not stay in Modin any longer, as they could not hold out against the king's power. So Mattathiah called out: "Everyone who wants to remain true to God and fight for his religion, follow me." He and his sons, with their families, then left their houses and their land and fled into the hills. Many of the Jews who would not give up their religion gathered around them to worship God and keep the laws of Moses.

There they were, then, a handful of brave men in the mountains and the thousands of powerful Syrians against them. But they were not afraid, those brave people. They knew that they were in the right and they meant to fight those wicked idolaters, no matter how many thousands of them came. From time to time they used to come down to



"The wicked King Antiochus and his soldiers"

the towns and villages and throw down the idols they found there and encourage their people, and the enemy was never able to follow them into those rocky mountains. But the old Mattathiah could not stand the hard life in the wild mountains, and he soon died. Before he died, however, he called his five sons to him and made them promise that they would not give up the fight until they either died or drove the wicked enemy out of the land. And, when he had finished talking to them, he made Judah, the strongest and bravest of his sons, the leader.

Now, there had never been as brave a man as Judah since the time of David. He was called the "Maccabee" because he carried a banner on which four letters that spell "Maccabee" were written. (Maccabee is not really a word but merely the first letters of four different Hebrew words which mean: "Who is like Thee among the mighty, O Lord!") Altogether he had only about six thousand men with him and, by the time he sent away those who were in the least afraid to go to battle, he had only three thousand left. Yet with these few he dared to attack the large Syrian army that Antiochus had sent against

him and, by fighting bravely, he and his men defeated the Syrians. A second and larger army was now sent against the Maccabees (all the brothers were now called the Maccabees because they were led by Judah), but Judah and his men came forth to meet the king's army, and the Syrians were again defeated. A third and fourth army, this time fifty thousand strong, were sent by the angry Antiochus against Judah, but each time the brave Judah and his men carried off the victory until, at last, the enemy fled, and left Palestine in the hands of the Maccabees.

On the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month Kislev Judah then entered Jerusalem, took the idols out of the Temple, and the worship of the true God started again. The lights of the Temple that had been put out by the Syrians were again lit and for eight days a great and joyous feast was celebrated, and Jerusalem again became a busy city, full of life and happiness. And from that time on our people have always remembered the great and brave acts of the Maccabees by celebrating a feast every year that starts on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev and lasts eight days. During that feast, little lights

are burned, starting with one and adding one more every evening until eight lights are lit, and songs of joy are sung, just as the Maccabees did at the time they won back for their people their capital and their country and started again the worship of the one true God in the Temple. This feast is called Chanukah, or Dedication, which means the feast that has always reminded our people of the time when the Temple at Jerusalem was given over (dedicated) again to the worship of the one true God.

The Second Temple Destroyed.

THE victories of the Maccabees meant a great deal to the Jews, of course. They were now able to live as a free nation again, keeping God's commandments, studying the law, and worshiping in the Temple at Jerusalem. But this only lasted about two hundred years after the brave Maccabees won their last victory. The Romans, who had conquered ever so many other countries and who were the most powerful people of those days, made an attack upon

Palestine, and the Jews lost their country. The king of the Romans, Vespasian, who was much more cruel and wicked man than Shalmaneser or Nebuchadnezzar had been, made up his mind to drive all the Jews out of their country and to destroy it, so that they could never go back there again. He, therefore, sent his son, Titus, with an immense and mighty army to conquer the land of the Jews.

Titus, who was just as cruel and wicked as his father was, at once started an attack on Jerusalem. His army was so large and powerful that all nations were afraid of it. The same army had conquered many a city in a very short time, simply because the people there were afraid to fight against the Romans. But the Jews, the people of David and Judah the Maccabee, were not going to give up their city and country without a fight. They knew, of course, that the Romans were stronger than they were and that the Roman army was larger than theirs. But that did not matter, for they remembered how much larger and stronger the Syrian army had been and how the Maccabees had defeated them and won back their country. And, I really think that all might have turned out well for

the Jews, if they were only united. But, I am sorry to say, they were not united just then. Quarrels broke out among them, they destroyed one another's grain, and the nation was becoming weak just at the time when it had to fight against a most powerful enemy. Then, when Titus had already broken through the outer wall of the city (Jerusalem had two walls), they saw the terrible mistake they had made and united to fight against him. But it was too late. They had waited too long and given the enemy too big a start. Even then they were able to drive the enemy back a number of times. But they could not hold out very long. There was not enough food in the city, and many died of starvation. Those who managed to keep alive on the little food they had fought like lions. The Romans themselves were surprised to see such bravery as the Jews showed. But it made Titus and his men only the more angry, and their attack became fiercer and fiercer until, at last, the inner wall was broken through. A terrible struggle then took place. The Jews kept on fighting, and the Romans killed every man, woman and child they came across. Pretty soon every house in the

city was burning and, on the ninth day of Ab, the same day on which the first Temple was destroyed, the Roman soldiers set fire to the Temple and burned it.

Thus the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple burnt. Palestine was in the hands of the Romans. About half a million Jews lay dead and the rest were made prisoners and taken to strange lands, where they were treated most cruelly. But there is one thing those wicked Romans could not take from the Jews and which they could not kill or destroy. And that is, their religion. They were separated and taken into different lands, but they still loved one another and felt that they belonged to one another. They lost their country, but they still had their laws. Their Temple was destroyed, but they still kept their worship of the one true God and, wherever they went and wherever they were, they carried with them the love and the laws and the worship of the one true God and taught these to other nations. Time and again cruel people tried to make them give these up, but to this day the Jews have always remained true to their religion and to their God.

Our Bible.

HERE is but one thing more I want to tell you and then my stories will be finished. You have perhaps wondered how I know all the things I have been telling you and may have wanted to know where they are to be found, and so I am going to tell you. A long time ago they were all written down in a great work which has twenty-four books and is called the "Bible." And I am going to tell you what each of these books is called and what it contains, so that you may know exactly where the different stories can be found. But, before I do that, I want to say that there are three parts to the Bible, "Law" (Torah, in Hebrew) which has five books, the Five Books of Moses; "Prophets" (Nebiim, in Hebrew) which has eight books (four of these are known as the earlier, and four as the later Prophets); "Holy Writings" (Kethubim, in Hebrew) which has eleven books.

And now let me tell you first what the different books are called and then what they contain:

THE LAW (TORAH).

The Five Books of Moses.

1. Genesis (Bereshith).
2. Exodus (Shemoth).
3. Leviticus (Vayikra).
4. Numbers (Bamidbar).
5. Deuteronomy (Debarim).

THE PROPHETS.

The Earlier Prophets

1. Joshua.
2. Judges.
3. The two books of Samuel.
4. The two books of Kings.

The Later Prophets.

5. Isaiah.
6. Jeremiah.
7. Ezekiel.
8. The twelve Minor Prophets (Hosea Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah Nahum, Habadiah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). These are

called "Minor Prophets" because their books are smaller than those of the other prophets.

THE HOLY WRITINGS.

1. Psalms.
2. Proverbs.
3. Job.
4. Song of Songs.
5. Ruth.
6. Lamentations.
7. Ecclesiastes.
8. Esther.
9. Daniel.
10. Ezra and Nehemiah.
11. The two books of Chronicles.

These books of the Bible contain:

Genesis—The beginning of the history of mankind and the history of the Patriarchs.

Exodus—An account of Israel's departure from Egypt, the giving of the Law, and the building of the Tabernacle.

Leviticus—The laws concerning the Temple service and the priests of olden times, and many other laws that teach us how to be good and pure.

Numbers—An account of the twelve tribes and their journey through the wilderness.

Deuteronomy—The farewell address of Moses, a review of the four previous books, and an account of the death of Moses.

Joshua—The history of the conquest of Canaan.

Judges—The history of the various teachers and leaders who ruled over Israel after the time of Joshua.

Samuel—The history of Samuel, Saul and David.

Kings—Israel's history from the time of Solomon to the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah.

The Later Prophets—The teachings and speeches of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve Minor Prophets.

Proverbs—Wise sayings by King Solomon.

Psalms—Like the Books of Moses, this book has five parts, and is divided into one hundred and fifty chapters, most of which were written by King David.

Job—The story of the great sufferer, Job, of his patience and his conversation with his three friends.

The Song of Songs—A great song by King Solomon in which it is shown how much God loves his people.

Ruth—The Story of Ruth and Naomi.

Lamentations—the sad story about the destruction of Jerusalem, written by the prophet Jeremiah.

Ecclesiastes—Some thoughts expressed by King Solomon about the things that make us vain and proud but which are useless.

Esther—The story of Purim.

Daniel—The story of Daniel at the time the Jews lived in Babylonia. (The book is written partly in Hebrew, partly in Aramaic).

Ezra and Nehemiah—The history of these great men and their work during the time the Jews rebuilt the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Chronicles—A review of the history of our people from Adam to the time they returned from Babylonia.

The stories of the Maccabees and the Destruction of the Second Temple were written after the Bible had been finished, but they may be found in all books that give the history of those times.

Pronouncing Glossary of Biblical Names.

KEY TO THE PRONUNCIATION.

ā as in pale, tame; ä as in arm, father; â as in hat, pad; â as in fair, hair; a as in call, fall; ē as in me, meet; ě as in met second; ē as in earn, her; i as in fine, mine; ĩ as in him, dim; ĩ as in machine, genuine; ō as in alone, hold; ō as in on, not, ō as in or, nor; ū as in mute, union; ū as in rube, crude; ū as in us, sum.

AARON—ār 'on
ABEL—ā' bēl
ABIATHAR—ā-bī' ä-thār
ABIGAIL—āb' ĩ -gāl
ABIMELECH—ābīm' ě-lĕk
ABINADAB—ā-bĭn' ä dāb
ABINOAM—ä-bĭn' ō-ām
ABISHAG—āb' ĩ-shäg
ABNER—āb' nēr
ABRAHAM—ā' brä-hām
ABSALOM—āb'sa-lom
ACHAN—ā'kän
ACHISH—ā'kĭsh
ADAH—ā'dä
ADAM—äd' äm
ADAR—ā' dār
ADONIJAH—ä-dō-ni' jă
ADULLAM—ä-dül' lām
AGAG—ā' gäg
AHAB—ā'hăb
AHASUERUS—ā-häs-ūē' rūs
AHAZ—ā' hăz
AHIMELECH—ä-hīm' ě-lĕk
AHITHOPHEL—ä-hĭth' ō-fĕl
AI—ā' ĩ
AMALEK—ām' ä-lĕk
AMASA—ä-mā' să
AMMON—ām' mon
AMORITE—ām' ō-rĭte
AMOS—ā' mūs
AMRAM—ām' rām
ARARAT—ār' ä-răt
ARTAXERXES—ār-tă-sēr' xēs
ASA—ā' să

ASHER—ăsh'ēr
AZARIAH—ăz-ă-rĭ' ä
ASSYRIA—ăssĭr' ĩă
BAAL—bā'äl
BABEL—bā' bēl
BALAAM—bā' lām
BALAK—bā' lăk
BARAK—bā'răk
BASHAN—băsh'ăn
BATHSHEBA—băth-shē'bă
BEERSHEBA—bēr-shē'bă
BELSHAZZAR—bĕl-shăz' zār
BENJAMIN—bĕn' jă-mĭn
BETHEL—bĕth' ěl
BETHLEHEM—bĕth'lĕ-hĕm
BETHUEL—bĕ-thû' ěl
BETHZUR—bĕth' zûr
BEZALEL—bĕ-zāl' ěl
BOAZ—bō' äz
CAIN—cān
CALEB—cā' lĕb
CANAAN—cā' năn
CYRUS—cĭ' rūs
DAGON—dā' gon
DAN—dăn
DANIEL—dăn' ĩ ěl
DARIUS—dă rĭ' ūs
DAVID—dă' vĭd
DEBORAH—dĕb' ō-ră
DELILAH—dĕ-li' lă
DEUTERONOMY—dū-tĕ-
rôn' ō-mĭ
DINAH—dĭ' nă
DOEG—dō' ěg

DOTHAN—dō' thān
 ECCLESIASTES—ēk-lē-sī-
 EDEN—ē' dēn ās' tēz
 EDOM—ē' dom
 EGLON—ēg' lon
 EGYPT—ē jīpt
 EHUD—ē'hūd
 ELI—ē' li
 ELIEZER—ē-li-ē' zēr
 ELIJAH—ē-li' jā
 ELIMELECH—ē-līm' ē-lēk
 ELISHA—ē-li' shā
 ELKANAH—ēl-kā' nā
 ENDOR—ēn' dōr
 EPHRAIM—ē' frā-īm
 EPHRON—ē' fron
 ESAU—ē' sū
 ESTHER—ēs' tēr
 EVE—ēv
 EXODUS—ēx' ō-dūs
 EZEKIEL—ē'zē' kī-ēl
 EZRA—ēz' rā
 GAD!—gād
 GAZA—gā' zā
 GEDALIAH—gēd-ā-li' ā
 GENESIS—jēn' ē-sīs
 GERIZIM—gēr' i-zīm
 GERSHOM—gēr' shom
 GIBEON—gīb' ē-on
 GIDEON—gīd' ē-on
 GILEAD—gīl' ē-ād
 GILGAL—gīl' gāl
 GOLIATH—gō-li' āth
 GOMORRAH—gā-mōr' ā
 HABAKKUK—hā-bāk' ūk
 HADASSAH—hā-dās' sāh
 HAGAR—hā' gār
 HAGGAI—hāg' ī
 HAM—hām
 HAMAN—hā' mām
 HANANIAH—hā-nā-nī' ā
 HANNAH—hān' nā
 HARAN—hā' rām
 HAROSETH—hārō-sēth
 HEBRON—hē' bron
 HEZEKIAH—hēz-ēkī' ā
 HIRAM—hī' rām
 HITTITE—hīt' tīte

HOREB—hō' rēb
 HOSEA—hō-sē' ā
 HULDAH—hūl' dā
 HUR—hūr
 ICHABOD—īk' ā-bod
 ISAAC—ī' zāk
 ISAIAH—ī-sā' īā
 ISHBOSHETH—īsh-bōsh' ēth
 ISHAMEL—īsh' mā-ēl
 ISRAEL—īs' rā-ēl
 ISSACHAR—īs'sā-kār
 JABESH—jā, bēsh
 JABIN—jā' bīn
 JACOB—jā' cob
 Jael—jā' ēl
 JAPHET—jā' fēt
 JEBUS—jē' būs
 JEHOASH—jē-hō' āsh
 JEHOIAKIM—jē-hoi' ā-kīm
 JEHU—jē' hū
 JEPHTHAH—jēf' thā
 JEPHUNNEH—jē'fūn' ē
 JEREMIAH—jēr-ē-mī' ā
 JERICHO—jēr' ī-kō
 JEROBOAM—jēr-ō-bō' ām
 JERUSALEM—jē-rū'sā-lēm
 JESSE—jēs' sē
 JETHRO—jēth' rō
 JEZEBAL—jēz' ē-bēl
 JOAB—jō' āb
 JOB—jōb
 JOCHEBED—jōk' ē-bēd
 JONAH—jō' nā
 JONATHAN—jōn' ā-thān
 JOPPA—jōp' ā
 JORDAN—jōr' dān
 JOSEPH—jō' sēf
 JOSHUA—jōsh' ū-ā
 JOSIAH—jō-sī' ā
 JOTHAM—jō' tham
 JUDAH—jū' dā
 JUDAEA—jū-de' ā
 JUDITH—jū' dīth
 KIBROTH HATAVAH—
 kīb'rōth hā-tā' ā-vā
 KISH—kīsh
 KORAH—kō' rā
 LABAN—lā' bān

LEAH—lē' ā
 LEBANON—lēb' ā-non
 LEVI—lē vī
 LEVITICUS—lē-vit' i-kūs
 LOT—lōt
 LUZ—lūz
 MACCABEES—māk' ā-bēz
 MACHPELAH—māk-pē' lā
 MALACHI—māl' ā-kī
 MANASSEH—mā-nās' sē
 MANNA—mān' ā
 MARAH—mā' rā
 MENE—mē-nē'
 MENORAH—mē-nō-rā
 MERAB—mē' rāb
 MESOPOTAMIA—mēs-ō-pō-
 tā' mī-ā
 MESSIAH—mēs-sī' ā
 MICAH—mī' kā
 MIDIAN—mīd' i-ān
 MIRIAM—mīr' i-ām
 MISHAEL—mīsh' ā-ēl
 MIZPEH—mīz' pē
 MOAB—mō' āb
 MORDECAI—mōr'dē-ki
 MORIAH—mō-rī' ā
 MOSES—mō' zēz
 NAAMAN—nā' āmān
 NABAI—nā' bāl
 NABOTH—nā' bōth
 NADAB—nā' dāb
 NAHOR—nā' hōr
 NAHUM—nā' hūm
 NAOMI—nā' ō-mī
 NAPHTALI—nāf' tā-li
 NATHAN—nāt' hān
 NEBO—nē' bō
 NEBUCADNEZZAR—nēb-ū-
 kād-nēzār
 NEHEMIAH—nē-hē-mī' āh
 NICANOR—nī-cā' nōr
 NINEVEH—nīn' ē-vē
 NISAN—nīs' sān
 NOAH—nō' ā
 NUN—nūn
 OBADIAH—ō' bā-dī' ā
 OG—ōg
 ORPAH—ōr' pā

OTHNIEL—ōth' nī-ēl
 PALESTINE—pal' es-tine
 PESACH—pēs' sāh
 PHARAOH—fā' rō
 PHILISTINE—fī' līs-tine
 PHINEAS—phīn' ē-ās
 PHOENICIA—phē-nī cīa
 PISGAH—pīs' gā
 PITHOM—pī' thom
 POTIPHAR—pōt'-īphār
 PURIM—pū' rīm
 RAAMSES—rām' sēz
 RACHEL—rā' chēl
 RAHAB—rā' hāb
 REBECAH—rē-bēk' a
 REHOBOAM—rē-hō-bō' ām
 REHOBOTH—rē-hō' both
 REPHIDIM—rē-fīd' īm
 REUBEN—rū' bēn
 REZIN—rēz' īn
 RUTH—rūth
 SABBATH—sāb' bāth
 SAMARIA—sā-mā' rī-ā
 SAMSON—sām' son
 SAMUEL—sām' ū-ēl
 SARAH—sā' rā
 SAUL—saul
 SEDER—sā'dēr
 SENNACHERIB—sēn-ī-
 kē-rīb
 SETH—sēt
 SHABUOTH—shā-bū' ōt
 SHAMGAR—shām' gāi
 SHARON—shār' on
 SHASHAK—shā' shāk
 SHEBA—shē' bā
 SHECHEM—shē' kēm
 SHEM—shēm
 SHIBBOLETH—shīb' bō-lēt
 SHOFAR—shō' fār
 SHUSHAN—shū' shān
 SION—sī' hon
 SIMEON—sīm' ē-on
 SINAI—sī' nī
 SISERA—sīs' ē-rā
 SIVAN—sī' vān
 SODOM—sōd' om
 SOLOMON—sōl' ō-mon

SUCCOTH—sûc' cōth
 SYRIA—sîr' i-ă
 TABOR—tă' bôr
 TAMMUZ—tăm' mûz
 TEBETH—tē' bēth
 TEKEL—tē' kēl
 TERAH—tē' ră
 TIGLATHPILESER—Tig-
 lăth-pî-lē' sēr
 TIRZAH—tîr' ză
 TUBAL—tû' băl
 TYRE—tîr
 URIAH—û-rî'

UZ—ûz
 VASHTI—văsh' tî
 ZACHARAH—zăch-ă-rî'
 ZEBADIAH—zēb-ă-dî'ă
 ZEBULUN—zē' bû-lûn
 ZEDEKIAH—zēd-ēkî'ă
 ZEPHANIAH—zēph-ăni'ă
 ZERUBBABEL—zē-rûb' bă
 bēl
 ZIKLAG—zîk' lăg
 ZION—zî' on
 ZIPPORAH—zîp' pôr-ă
 ZOAR—zō' ār

